KAMBA RAMAYANAM

Yuddha Kandam

Part - II

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

TRUTH ALONE TRIUMPHS

KAMBA RAMAYANAM

Yuddha Kandam̆

Part - II

Translated by

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19. CERTAIN ARMY CHIEFS KILLED

Some of the Rakshasas heard the drums,
And their love of fighting raised thereby
Went to Ravana and begged him
To send them out to do battle. (1)

Of these were Thick Sides and Smoky Eyes
Requesting that they might be sent;
But when Ravana was pleased to agree,
His men said, "Lord! Hear us about them". (2)

"When the elephants, horses, chariots and men
All perished, and our Chief was alone,
These two babbling, 'The arrow! the arrow!'
Just ran away. And now they are back?" (3)

When they said this, the cruel Ravana
Let out his great wrath, and exclaimed,
"Is this their service? Catch them now!"
And turned on them with indignation (4)

Hearing that, the attendants
Caught them by force retreating
And stood back. Then Ravana said
"Don't kill them. Just listen to me. (5)

"The right thing to do now
Is to cut off their noses,
And take them round the city announcing,
To the beat of a drum, 'Look at these cowards'." (6)

On the instant men with swords
Hastened to cut their noses off
When one Mali prevented them, saying,
"Lord, this will not be right. (7)

"Is it not usual from of old
That those who run away from a fight
Have fought later with great vigour
And even if they did not win
Given up their lives in the fight?
Who keeps his courage for ever intact? (8)

"O King, you make no allowances!
How many armies have fought against us
Of gods and Titans, and fled back!
Consider how even Indra was afraid. (9)

"Varuna trembled for his life
Until he secured Rama's mercy.
Compared with him, what are Rakshasas?
This punishment, truth to tell, isn't wise. (10)

"Of that army of forty *vellams*
All the Rakshasas have perished
Except only three, who saved their lives.
Wise one, who can be braver than they? (11)

"The noose snapped. More than half our army
Perished. Lord, even you have retreated.
When from that battle, your son came back
Will you cut off the noses of these poor creatures? (12)

"At the very name Lakshmana
The sea of Rakshasas, all perturbed,
Will now slam their doors shut.
If you cut all their noses off
The seven seas won't be enough to take them,
Nor the job finished till Dissolution! (13)

"Those who afraid of a fight
Worshipped that day the messenger Hanuman
Make up more than half of our army,
Unblamed, all their noses intact! (14)

"Sita has not been surrendered,
Nor the war brought to an end in a day;
You haven't cut off the noses of all
Who have come back without keeping your promise!"
Said he in conclusion. (15)

Seeing his wrath assuaged,
Those two encouraged, and knowing his mind,
Themselves angry and red-eyed,
Said not one but many things
Regarding their own condition. (16)

"Your son, Lord, retreated, didn't he?
Went rushing up to the sky
And performed his magic from there,
And then came here, saving his life! (17)

"Listen, you who know what strength is!
Today, otherwise tomorrow,
Not allowing a third day,
We will destroy all these enemies
As if they were butter in a copper dish
Being heated in a blazing fire! (18)

"Send us to the fight---and after that
You will hear only one of two things:
Either that we killed or were killed.
You will not hear that we came back defeated",
Said they and swore, eager to die. (19)

He sent with them ten *vellams*
Of Rakshasas with shining weapons,
And elephants, bright chariots,
And sturdy horses befitting that number. (20)

Yagnyasatru, Sacrifice Hater;
Suryasatru, Hater-of-the-Sun;
Mali the ankleted, Pishacha the Demon
With teeth gleaming like diamonds. (21)

Commanded by the world conqueror
They set forth with all these---
Elephants, horses, chariots and men
Winding on their way, and looking like hills! (22)

Because of the dust which swallowed the skies,
The gods, their eyes swallowed, couldn't sum them up,
And no one indeed could estimate rightly
That army which seemed to swallow all numbers. (23)

That army resembled an ocean,
The numerous white flags on tops
Of the chariots and the elephants
Waving like the waves of the sea,
And the weapons carried by the men
Gleaming like so many fishes (24)

The drums sounded like the sea
Surrounding the out-stretched earth;
The elephants trumpeted like the clouds
Dark like them, and rivalling the sea;
The horses neighed like thunderous clouds. (25)

The deadly elephants which would not go
The way the others went before,
Stopped, played coy, wouldn't be instructed,
Followed each other walking like hills
Carrying head-bands attached to them. (26)

The musty elephants surrounded by crows[1]
Stretched their long trunks to the sky
And pierced the clouds to quench their thirst,
Unwilling to move forward. (27)

The brightness of the various weapons,
Of the ornaments of the soldiers,
Of the gee-gaws attached to the chariots,
Horses and elephants, and their anklets
Drove away the darkness everywhere. (28)

Rama saw that army, and said,
"Tell me, is that stern-looking leader
The same as the one who worked that witchcraft?"
And the well-informed Vibhishana said: (29)

"That one thundering in his chariot
Like an angry lion in its cave
Eager to wage a vengeful war,
Cavern-mouthed and crescent-fanged,
With a quiverful of flaming arrows at his back
And a bow in his hands, is Thick Sides! (30)

"Eyes red like fire, eager to eat up
The lives of those who oppose him,
Wide-mouthed, smacking his jaws with his lips,
Is Smoky Eyes in his chariot of gold. (31)

1. Waiting to feed on the creatures the elephants would kill.

"Speech stuttering like a madcap's,
A trident for weapon, mounted in his chariot,
Hill-like and defying you
To cut off his head if you can,
Is the Rakshasa Diamond Fangs, (32)

"Mounted on a horse swifter than wind
Or one's thought, mouth pouting,
Roaring like the sea, with a trident
That can pierce the sky, is the one named Demon. (33)

"That one in the blazing chariot of gold,
More noisy than the sea, hotter than fire
Is the Sun Hater; and that other one,
Eyes streaming blood and sparks,
Goes by the name of Sacrifice Hater. (34)

"The one with his cavalry like stalks of red rice,
The product of a dreadful penance,
Who can put even Siva to fear,
Is Mali in his chariot", said he, and bowed. (35)

The monkey horde roared like the sea,
Blessed Rama and proceeded;
The armies opposed began to fight;
The gods in heaven, confined there,
Perspired, feared, trembled and sighed. (36)

Stones were flung thundering, as at Dissolution
And were answered with arrows from bows;
Teeth were knocked out like rocks from hills,
And heads followed like the hills themselves. (37)

The numerous stones hurled by the monkeys
Hit the fierce elephants, the saddled horses,
The wheeled chariots and the Rakshasas,
Enough to damage even Ananta's hood.[2] (38)

2. By all of them falling down unsupportably.

The discuses hurled by the Rakshasas
Knocked down the monkeys' hands with their mountains,
Their long legs and upright tails,
Rocks, trees and extended heads. (39)

The javelins which those riders threw
Riding their horses swift as thought
Split the bodies of the monkey chiefs
And tore up the ground underneath. (40)

The stones flung by the monkey horde
Destroyed the flags atop the chariots,
The charioteers, their heads and teeth,
The Rakshasas with their necks and bows
As well as their elephants. (41)

The leaf-head spears which the horsemen threw
Went through the bodies of the monkeys
And killed them, as if they were serpents
Seeking their holes in their mountain caves
When battered by hailstones in a rain. (42)

The elephants seized the monkeys' tails and
beat them;
The monkeys catching the elephants by their legs
Beat the elephants. They would too
Beat the Rakshasas with the elephants;
And the Rakshasas dealt with them with their spears. (43)

The Rakshasa horde, dark like the sea,
Hit by the monkeys' stones would collapse;
And the monkey, army, shot at by the Rakshasas,
Teeth and heads gone, would give up its ghost! (44)

Like those in life rendered poor
Who die helpless, and can't help others,
The chariots hit by rocks, axles broken,
Could not be drawn by their horses. (45)

The elephants, their riders killed,
Caught in rivers of blood couldn't proceed,
Like ships in the sea, without captain or crew
Murdered by pirates, drifting with their sails. (46)

Many horses, their riders killed,
Stumbled through rivers of blood,
Blood oozing from their mouths,
And resembled the Badavagni.[3] (47)

Their heads bashed into their stomachs,
Many husbands of the Rakshasis
Could not be identified by them
Even though they had long lived together,
And the poor women stood doubtful on the field! (48)

Smoky Eyes and Hanuman engaged each other;
Victorious Angada took on Thick Sides;
Mali with the reserve bow fought with Nila;
The Demon and Panasa joined issue. (49)

The Sun Hater fought with the Sun's son;
The Sacrifice Hater opposed and fought
With Rama's incomparable brother;
And the Diamond Fangs with Idaba. (50)

Among the fierce white-fanged Rakshasas
And the chieftains of the lionlike monkeys,
Each faced another of equal status,
Fighting fiercely, and with such verve,
As to put the gods into a fright! (51)

Of the ten *vellams* of Rakshasas
The monkey heroes accounted for six;
And as for the remaining four,
Lakshmana quelled them with his arrows. (52)

3. The fiery mare in the sea, supposed to keep its water constant by drinking up any excess.

When the blood flowed into the sea
It did not lose itself in it;
On the other hand, it was the sea
Which got the look of molten copper;
While the sated fish looked like coral,
And the pearls looked like *kunri*.[4] (53)

All the water leaping up in the sea
Shining like blood, different gems
Appeared to have only one colour,
While the pearls from the conches and those
from the heads
Of elephants, both alike looked red. (54)

When that noisy war was on
The sun arose out of the sea
As if, after killing with his hands, his rays,
His foe, the night, a dark elephant
And taken a purificatory bath,
He rose from a river of his blood! (55)

One sun, Rama dispelled the Rakshasa darkness
And another in the sky the outer darkness.
So that the world had. to protect it,
Two guardian suns giving great brightness. (56)

The great darkness departing from the earth,
The dead elephants and the river of blood
Came to light, as at dawn
Mountain and sea become visible
Holding the places they occupy. (57)

---

4. A red bean with a black spot on top.

In the morning, mid the red stream
And the mire of the corpses' fat'
The faces of the dead brushed by beetles
Looked as if a lotus forest
Was being caressed by the sun. (58)

Chariots, elephants and horses
Lay spread on the battlefield
As, at the time of Dissolution,
A hot air blowing, there will be found
The gods' chariots, clouds, mountains,
And the worlds of the stars scattered on earth. (59)

Women with faces like the moon
And wearing flowers redder than fire
Reached the field to embrace their husbands---
Huge trees lying to be clasped by creepers. (60)

Lissom waists, lovely breasts, red hair,
Flashing teeth to cause distress,
They reached the field only to find
That their dear husbands' fresh-hewed heads
Were being eaten by the demons,
Whom they pursued and captured. (61)

A Rakshasi with a bright conch epaulette
Saw her husband's body and limbs
And wishing to put them together
Gave up the attempt when a fox ran away
With the heart and intestines
And, unable to chase it, sighed and died! (62)

One with eyes long, broad and bright
Saw jackals running with her husband's shoulders
And not parting with them, however entreated.
Chasing these jackals, many women
Hurt their small feet as they trod
On the sharp weapons lying around. (63)

Good-hearted women seeking their husbands
On the mountainous heaps of corpses
Resembled lovely peahens
On tops of hills parted from their mates
And getting tired looking for them. (64)

Some who saw their husbands' lips
Curled in wrath when they were fighting,
Said they must be trying to hide
The marks made on them by other women
And grew quite hot with jealousy. (65)

Some who saw a few headless trunks
And could not identify the bodies,
Removing their mails and seeing beneath
The mauls they had left in love's embrace,
Gazed and gazed, and gave up their lives! (66)

Eyes made into raining clouds,
Many sought their husbands' bodies
And, sinking in the blood which flowed
From the hills of corpses, gave up their lives. (67)

Hanuman, tall and broad-footed,
And Smoky Eyes engaged in a fight
Belching fire, neither of them
Advanced or retreated,
Yielded an inch or won. (68)

The fiery sinner, like a dark cloud lowering,
Shot off twentyfive arrows
From his bow on the body
Of Hanuman, Añjana's scion. (69)

When those arrows pierced his arms
Draining blood red like *veezhi*,[5]
Hanuman fierce like the wind of Dissolution,
Tore up that Rakshasa's huge chariot. (70)

His chariot broken, as he neared the sky,
Bow in hand, that bow was destroyed
By an arrow from Lakshmana;
And Hanuman clasped him and drew him down. (71)

Throwing his body on the ground
Bigger than a mountain,
He kicked it with the legs which had
Leaped across the sea,
Dried up his spirit, twisted his neck
Out of which fire issued
And throwing it into the sea
Quenched his wrath. (72)

Thick Sides and Angada, eyes like fire,
Determined to kill each other,
Enraged, belching smoke
Came next, fighting each other. (73)

That warrior shot fiftyone shafts
At Angada's shoulders---
So many balls flung at an elephant
Mad with must and trumpeting,
Which should, with stout ropes, have been tied
to a stake. (74)

When Angada, resembling in colour and wrath,
Rahu creeping towards the sun,
Seized with strong hands his chariot
And flung it high up in the sky, (75)

---

5. A medicinal plant red in colour.

Thick Sides threw away his bow
And descending from his sunlike chariot
Falling down to destruction,
Sent a spear at his wrestler's chest
Infallible like a sage's curse. (76)

Rama, Lord of the world, saw it,
And said to himself, "This is no spear
But Death the Ancient", and with a venomous arrow
Cut it and wiped out its very name. (77)

Then Angada, praising the strength
Of him who had first displaced
And then measured the fourteen worlds,
Clove in two with the speed of thought
That Rakshasa who had flung his spear,
And felt very pleased with himself! (78)

Great Mali and Nila fought each other
Making those in heaven rain flowers
And compare that fight to the one between
The king of the gods and that of the Titans[6] (79)

When a rock was thrown at Mali
And his bow was broken in two,
That doughty one, sword in hand,
Challenged Nala and stood in his way. (80)

Just then Kumuda, who was elsewhere,
Brought a cliff, and approaching near,
Heaved it, and throwing it,
Reduced his chariot to a heap of dust. (81)

---

6. Who these two are is left to our guess--- Indra and Vritra? Narasimha and Hiranyakasipu?or Indra and Hiranya?

A heavy tree flung by Nila
Was cut with his sword by Mali,
But his shoulder was cut off
By an arrow sent by Rama's brother. (82)

When that shoulder fell to the glittering arrow
But Mali still went on fighting,
Lakshmana left disgusted, saying,
"The likes of me won't fight such a fight"[7] (83)

The warriors going to Rama,
The sea-hued one, said admiring,
"Who has ever waged such a war
As this one has, the great bowman?" (84)

Lakshmana fighting with the Sacrifice Hater
Split his chest with a fiery arrow
Saying, "Such is your life!" and thereon
That one fell and lost his life. (85)

Sacrifice Hater's bow destroyed
By the arrows of the doughty hero,
With his neck and legs were gone,
His chariot and his showers of stones![8] (86)

The son of the Sun, who had for his subjects
The entire race of monkeys,
Killed in the fight the Sun Hater,
Mountain-bodied, never retreating,
Who had once triumphed over his father, the Sun. (87)

---

7. It being unchivalrous to fight with a physically, as well metaphorically, disarmed man.

8. With which he used to disturb the sacrifices.

Idaba despatched a hill
Against Diamond Fangs who put up
A dreadful fight, eyes dropping venom,
Driving his chariot against the sky,
And destroyed both it and its driver. (88)

When his huge chariot was destroyed,
He threw away his bow, and with a club in hand
Came down and attacked Idaba with it
With such fury as made men ask,
"Will he survive this?", and would have frightened
The eight-armed Siva holding thunder in his hand. (89)

Idaba thus beaten, his spirit exhausted
Making one say that he would end
Like a mountain hit by thunder,
Hanuman, the long and the short,
Came to his rescue in his extremity. (90)

When Hanuman came with his body
Stretching to the very sky,
Diamond Fangs, the famous one,
Gave with his club his broad chest
A beating which made sparks fly! (91)

Catching him with his left hand,
Hanuman confiscated that club;
And with his fist, into which he put
The entire strength of his body,
Gave him a terrific punch, and finished him! (92)

The Rakshasa named Demon
Sent against Panasa
Guarding himself with a tree
And fighting like a tiger
A javelin which pierced his chest
And let out a stream of blood. (93)

That Demon, mounted on a horse,
Less a beast than a machine,
Made one wonder whether he was
On a cloud, or the sea, or the earth, or the sun---
On what? We are unable to say---
Only that he was a lover of warfare! (94)

Six thousand gods asked wondering,
"How many are there? A billion horses?
Or what?" Unable to understand
The antics of that unique horse
In a field where vultures hold the sway. (95)

Faster than the mind, faster than thought,
Faster than the wind in heaven---
You think it is in, and it is already out,
A horse never seen on the earth before! (96)

Demon riding this hawk of a horse
As if he was part of it
Killed with his spear heaps of monkeys
And wounded thereby Mother Earth. (97)

"In the time it takes to snap a finger
He is killing the monkeys with his sharp spear
In hundreds and two hundreds", said the gods
Terrified though normally not flustered. (98)

That one, Death personified,
Bent only on war and carnage,
Lakshmana, the expert bowman
Put to death with his wind missile. (99)

Riding his horse stepping to time
Even after he was beheaded,
That Rakshasa plied his dreadful spear
Kept killing, and not falling to the ground! (100)

20. CARP EYES KILLED

Bees bore the message to sweet-smiling Sita
That that was a lucky day for her;
Yama's men bore him the souls of the dead;
And Ravana's bore *him* the news of their death! (1)

Reaching the matchless one where he was,
They bowed to him sadly and said, "Alas!
There is no good news today",
And narrated what had happened to the heroes. (2)

The King of Lanka heard them
With a bitter heart, and sighed deep
Hissing like a dreadful serpent;
And the one next to him said thereon: (3)

"How is it, my Father, you didn't send me
Against him who killed my father?[1]
Did you not know I was available?
Alas, that you should have such sorrow! (4)

"I would have gone forward myself
But held back thinking it would be wrong.
King, is it credible that the earth,
Heaven, or aught else can vanquish me? (5)

"My tearful mother, plunged in sorrow
Will not part with her wedding-string
Before offering obsequies to her husband
In the skull of the one who killed him!
"You whom the vultures love as their feeder
Be pleased", said he, "to send me to the fight. (6)

---

1. Khara, vide stanza 16.

Ravana hearing Carp Eyes, replied,
"Very well, feed fat your ancient grudge";
And he, boon granted, bow in hand,
Shoulders swelling, got into his chariot. (7)

His own army of five crores
Followed by the King's twenty *vellams*,
Drums beating like the roaring sea,
And dust covering Lanka's peak;[2] (8)

Bloodshot Eyes and Lion guarding
His chariot on each side, as ordered by Ravana,
He went with the army's four divisions---
A moon surrounded by loving stars. (9)

Many huge banners held aloft
Provided a against the sun;
Elephants with their trunks sprinkled water;
And the monkey hordes tired by the fight
Enjoyed the rest they had earned. (10)

Tuskers trumpeted, horses neighed, drums beat;
The men shouted, and in addition
The din of the kettledrums pierced the globe
Making all lives wilt, and leaving no space
For even a breath of air to enter. (11)

The fierce army of the Rakshasas
Killed without cease; and the chiefs
Fought each other hand to hand;
Stones were flung, arrows shot;
The blood which was shed swept away elephants. (12)

---

2. Lit. the golden mountain top.

The mountains which the monkeys flung
Caught by the Rakshasas and hurled back
As if the heavens burst with their stars
Killed the monkeys like thunder in a forest,
And the devils gobbling them up
Raised a shout with their mouths half full! (13)

The weapons held by the Rakshasas
Were seized forcibly from their hands
By the monkeys, who killed them with those weapons;
And the foremost among the Rakshasas
Seized the rocks and trees held by the monkeys,
And killed the monkeys with those rocks and trees! (14)

Carp Eyes, with his bee-stuck garland,
A dark buffalo in his golden chariot,
After killing a lot of monkeys
Drove it straight to where Rama stood,
Prince of the rice tracts washed by the Ganges. (15)

The monkey army fleeing in terror
Thinking this was Indrajit,
Their chiefs rolled on the earth as if
A machine had attacked them,
While he approached Rama: (16)

His gold-hued garland drawing bees,
He said to Rama, "You killed my father;
So my wonted hate of the Trinity
Is now reduced and for you alone.
I will confront you with it today". (17)

The hero heard what the sinner said.
"Are you Khara's son come here
To avenge your long-standing grievance?
That indeed is a son's duty.
You spoke well, Sir", he said,
His shoulders well fitted for fame. (18)

Twanging his bow like thunder,
"I will end my anger", he said,
"Only with my fight with you",
And rained a shower of arrows.
As when dark clouds rising in the sky
Pour down on the peaks of hills. (19)

He sent a thousand arrows
  Against the lotus-eyed,
Two thousand at Lakshmana's mail,
  And planting cruel arrows on Hanuman
Enveloped all heaven with his shafts. (19 a)

Rama snapped all those arrows
With the fiery shafts he discharged,
And sent in addition one
To pierce Carp Eyes' chest---
And so it did and stood there
While he knitted his brows. (20)

Shaken by Rama's arrows, his eyes like the
sunflower
Emitting somke out of his mouth,
Carp Eyes sent a thousand shafts
Which had tasted enemy flesh
Against Rama's divine armour,
And made a terrific noise. (21)

The heavenly ones were amazed at this;
And Rama smiling sent six arrows
Which destroyed the hooves of the horses
Yoked to the golden chariot,
Cut down Carp Eyes' bow, and beheaded his
charioteer. (22)

Though, caused by that arrow,
Blood oozed out of his mouth
The colour of the sun,
Carp Eyes, because of his boons,
Rose in an instant into the sky,
And sent down from there thunder,
Wind and fire in great quantities
As at the time of Dissolution! (23)

There were endless crores of thunders,
And fierce winds as at Dissolution;
Dark clouds rained stones;
The bewildered monkeys ran away. (24)

Oppressed by fire and smoke wherever they went,
Clouds shedding magic flames as well as water,
The monkeys perished more than a thousand crores,
And Rama asked, "Is this magic or a boon?"
And Vibhishana bowing replied: (25)

"This is because of the boons unchangeable
Given to him by Vayu and Varuna,
The gods of Wind and of Water
As a reward for his penances"---
And Rama, his eyes a hundred-petalled lotus,
Said, "I will change all that in a second". (26)

Sending two arrows from his bow
He chased out the missiles of those two gods
And both of them fleeing from the sky
Plunged into the sea, and thereupon
Rain and tempest disappeared. (27)

Seeing that, the Rakshasa
Transformed all the sky to his shape
And, hiding himself in it,
Shot out crores and crores of spears;
And Rama seeing them was amazed.
"All this", he asked, "is one men's deed?" (28)

"Through witchcraft he has spread himself
Into space without a form;
No one can know where he is;
His body will not give him away.
What does one do with this fiery creature?"
He mused, saddened and perplexed. (29)

Seeing that that scapegrace Rakshasa
Had hidden his body, but blood still flowed
From the wound in his mouth caused by his arrow,
He followed that spoor and shot a shaft,
And Carp Eyes, beheaded, crashed to the ground. (30)

When that sharp and thundering arrow
Hit him, and the Rakshasa daubed with blood
Crashed down and rolled on the ground,
His magic disappeared, as the dark
With its dreams when day dawns. (31)

Bloodshot Eyes, his chariot decked
With numerous coloured flags,
Looking like a cloud in summer
Shooting fiery arrows, flying like the wind,
Was engaged by the fierce one,
The goldsmith, blacksmith and carpenter
Who made the bridge across the sea. (32)

He used his fearful bow that day
To shoot not one but many arrows
Like the fire of Dissolution;
And the one who stood there swept them away
With a tall tree, and confronted him
Like a lion meeting an elephant. (33)

When the twirling tree in his hand
Was shot to bits by that one's shafts,
He looked at that intrepid Rakshasa,
Contracted himself, and with a jump
Landed on his head--- the unique hero!
And the gods raised a shout
Enough to tear every direction. (34)

Like a rainbow on a volcano
That handsome monkey on his huge head
Gave it a kick, and made blood stream
From his eyes, his nose, and his ears.
His brains hung out, and Nala
Kicked his head down to the floor. (35)

When he died there, eyes shooting fire,
Lion with a dreadful bow and arrows
In a chariot decked with garlands
Came out shouting, "Whither away, fellow?"
And the monkey Panasa intervened. (36)

Leaping on him, Lion shot
Ten arrows called *pallams*
Hitting his shoulders and his chest
Like a clap of thunder.
And he blazing like ghee-fed fire
Took in his hand in an instant
The Rakshasa and his chariot. (37)

When that chariot was seized,
The red-eyed Lion looking like Meru
Leapt down, and Panasa
Hurled the chariot on his head;
And when he fell down, Panasa
The diamond-shouldered jumped on him,
And trampling on him ground away
His blood and life both together. (38)

By the arrows of the Emperor's sons
And the trees and rocks of the monkey horde,
The huge army indescribable
Of five crores and twenty *vellams*
Was all destroyed, and those who were not---
Ravana's messengers wielding no arms---
Went to him to report. (39)

21. THE BRAHMASTRA

When the unrighteous Ravana heard
What happened to Khara's son,
How Bloodshot Eyes' head was trampled,
The end of Lion, and how itwas felt
That the Rakshasa army had no future,
"Bring my son at once", he ordered. (1)

"Your father wants you", said the messengers.
"Have all those died who were sent?" he asked.
"Who but you could have returned?"
They said, and retailed all that happened---
And thereon he went quickly to his father. (2)

Bowing to his father, he said,
"Please, Sir, do not be depressed
That your sons are here no more.
Today you will see with Sita and the gods
A heap of corpses of monkeys and those men." (3)

After going round his father
He ascended a huge chariot,
Beflagged and capable of flying,
Drawn by a thousand lions,
Musical instruments playing,
With sixty *vellams* of Rakshasa swordsmen,
Elephants, chariots and horses. (4)

Kumbikai, timilai, chendai, kuradu,
Beri, pambai, the chapleted *murasu,*
Conch, cymbals, *panavam, turi,*
Kambali, urumi, thakkai, karadikai,
Flutes, *ambali, kanukai, umai, chakadai*---
All these drums big and small
And other instruments made a din.[1] (5)

Along with the drums on the elephants,
Their bells on each side sounded like the sea;
The golden harnesses of the horses,
The anklets of the infantry,
And the rattling of the chariots
Rose like the sea's roar to the sky. (6)

The noise of the conches, cornets, *aakulis,*
Kaalams, pilis and the flutes,
The lions' roars, the horses' guffaws,
The thunder of the chariots, and the trumpetings
Of those clouds on earth - the elephants---
Alternated with the clouds, in the sky! (7)

The stinging honey from various instruments
Which put the vocal ragas to shame;
The music from the strings of vinas
As sweet as sugar-candy;
The notes from *yaals* like the hums of bees,
And intoxicating like wine
Combined produced a food for the ears
Like ambrosia for the gods! (8)

---

1. The names of the different kinds of drums now no longer in use are best left in the Tamil, untranslated by vague and generalised terms.

The twang of the bows, the hubbub of the soldiers,
The noise made by loud calls;
The warriors raising their voices;
The admonitions, the slapping of shoulders;
The rattle made on the stones of the road
Were enough to drown the sea's roar. (9)

The dust made by the army---
  Each limb of it a sea
Rising up to the sky, made
  The eyes of the heavenly nymphs
Looking at those four seas
  Fill with tears,
So that what was a milky ocean
  Now turned to a sea of water. (10)

Surrounded by a thousand crores
  Of chariots ridden as if by gods,
He who had terrorised the gods
  In a golden chariot in their midst
Was like the sun in heaven
  Circled by numerous planets,
Stars and other pure lights
  Adorning the sky! (11)

He went to that stern battlefield
  And arranged that sea of an army
Never given to retreat
  In the shape of an *anril* bird
With its feathers, beak, red eyes and tail,
  Neck, body, legs and talon,
And stood in its midst in command. (12)

Taking in his hand the conch
Which Indra had left behind when he fled,
The right-whorled one which hid in its stomach
A noise to put the seven seas in fear
At the time of Dissolution,
He blew on it a terrific blast
Which made the gods shudder, and the quarters flee! (13)

The great army of the monkeys
Hearing the sound of that conch
Was like a herd of elephants
Hearing a lion's roar,
And scattered leaving no trace.
Indrajit also twanged his bow
Which was like Mount Meru,
The bow of Parvati's consort. (14)

Pierced were the monkeys' ears,
  Torn their hearts;
Their legs refused to move
  Trees and mountains slipped from their hands.
They were terrified, their mouths went dry;
  Their hair bristled.
"Are we still alive?"
  They asked each other. (15)

Sugriva, the son of the Sun,
And Hanuman, son of Vayu,
Angada, Rama and his brother,
And Vibhishana the red-eyed King
Were the only ones who stood there;
The rest of that army had fled! (16)

While those great chieftains stood
And the monkey flood broke banks and scattered,
The Rakshasas making a terrific din
As the sea at Dissolution
Filled the field in each direction. (17)

The hero Rama ascended
Hanuman's garlanded shoulders;
And his brother Lakshmana
Angada's hill-like ones.
And the gods showering incessantly
Honied flowers, gave them their blessings. (18)

The two bowmen garlanded
On Hanuman's and Angada's shoulders
Which could dislodge Meru itself
Resembled to those who could see them
Vishnu on Garuda and Siva on his bull. (19)

The army chiefs headed by Nila,
Pine trees and hills in their hands
Stood ready to attack; and Rama,
Son of the King who had of old[2]
Guarded both heaven and earth,
And aware of the course the fight would take
Warned them, and told them thus; (20)

"When this wicked Rakshasa
Aims his divine *astras* at you,
They cannot be repelled by your means
Nor will you be able to endure them.
Therefore stand behind me
In the places he will attack---
And you shall witness here today
What my bowmanship can do!" (21)

They stood as ordered; and those two heroes
Showered their thundering arrows
On chariots, horses, visored elephants
And Rakshasas dark as Dissolution's night,
So that the unwinking gods declared,
"Black confusion is now at hand!" (22)

2 Dasaratha with particular reference to his helping Indra against Sambaran to get back his lost heaven.

What can we say of the bowmanship
Which destroyed the flood of the oncoming Rakshasas
In the twinkling of an eye,
Except to compare it with Siva's
When with Meru for his bow
He destroyed the three cities? (23)

Indrajit, that hero of heroes,
Transfixed in his chariot, bow in hand,
Saw how his men fell
One on another in heaps
Without time to identify any,
Because of the way those two fought. (24)

"Have all the elephants been killed?
Have all the chariots been ruined?
Is there no soldier left
To remove the dead?" he wished to know,
Bewildered by the corpse-heap sky-high. (25)

"Just two of them, and the killed
Sixty *vellams* without a doubt!
They seem to employ not bows but a curse.
What is this witchcraft?" he wondered. (26)

He would look at the rain of arrows
And the river of blood;
The hill of corpses reaching the sky;
The heaps of pearls from the severed tusks
Of the elephants killed, and the heroes' shoulders. (27)

He would look at the mountains and the mountain
of heads
Reaching the sky with their fierce eyes;
Look at the heroes' arrows and the gleam
Of the weapons scattered on the field;
Look at their bows, and with his ears
Absorb the thunderous twangs they made. (28)

A thousand chariots, sturdy tuskers, curveting horses,
A thousand heads, deadly weapons--- all shot through:
Those racing arrows would not rest but went on---
And he gazed at their speed and number
wonder-struck! (29)

The arms of sixty *vellam* Rakshasas,
Hurled, shot, poured, hammered
Had all been reduced to powder---
A forest of machines, and it made him think. (30)

He saw women rushing, beating their stomachs
And falling on their husbands' corpses,
Like koels shot down to the earth;
And the headless corpses dancing their jigs
And frightening the vultures away
From the carrion on the field. (31)

Ignorant of the might of those lions,
He would wonder how many crore Angadas!
Will this world be enough for Hanuman?
Are there only two of these men?" (32)

He would look at the gods making that noise;
Look at the flowers scattered by them;
Look also at his throbbing left shoulder;[3]
Look at the corpses in every direction
And the rivers of blood dragging dead elephants. (33)

The monkey host even when it saw
That huge army decimated
Except for a thousand crore chariots
And a large number of Rakshasas,
Did not come back because of the fear
Inspired by the sinner in that chariot of gold. (34)

---

3. A bad omens for men.

When Hanuman saw that that huge army
Of sixty *vellams* had been destroyed,
And the unnumbered chariots
Reduced to a thousand crores,
He marvelled at the work of those two
And clapping his shoulders hurrahed loud. (35)

The thunderous noise in that terrible field
Made by Hanuman resulted in some
Falling off from the chariots they rode,
Others on the field drop their arms and die,
And even those in golden Lanka
Vomit blood and their lives out with it! (36)

"Cowards, get out!" said Indrajit scowling,
His body darker than a raincloud;
"If you are frightened so much by a noise,
What fierce fight can I except from you?
How are you better than these lying dead"?
Saying which, he advanced one against two! (37)

Immediately the thousand crores chariots
Rolled in noisily, as if tearing the earth,
The *diggajas* shaking their heads in terror,
Stars falling from the sky, and the gods getting
frightened. (38)

Lakshmana bowing to the one who had
His bent bow in hand, said to him,
"The world will say that I had lost
In that fight when I was bound
By the serpent noose by this valorous fellow. (39)

"'He can neither guard his friends', they will say,
"Nor push off the enemy;
Nor bind him as he was bound;
Nor give up his life fighting'. (40)

"If my arrow does not bring down
The head of this Indrajit,
I will be considered, when I die,
Not a feast fit for Yama, but despicable. (41)

'O gold-ankleted, gold-shouldered one,
Only if my arrow slits off
This sinner's head in front of you
Will I have justified my life
As your eternal slave. (42)

"Let me in fine tell you one thing---
If my hot shaft does not behead him
Quickly for all the world to see,
Let me lose all the boon I have earned
By having been your willing slave!" (43)

When valorous Lakshmana said that,
The gods hurrahed, "Our troubles are over";
All the boundless worlds hurrahed;
Dharma hurrahed, and so did Death. (44)

The Lotus-eyed too, flashing a smile,
Said, "Wise one, if you resolve on a thing,
Can even the gods who save and Kill
Come in your way? What else can happen?" (45)

Hearing that, he rose and bowed down
Quickly, and with a glad heart said,
"You shall see how I will destroy
This Rakshasa clan with their many chariots". (46)

Angada roared, a noise which sounded
Like thunder from the clouds, and frightened
The lions yoked to Indrajit's chariot;
And Lakshmana, Lord of Victory,
Sounded a conch which outroared the sea's roar! (47)

The Rakshasas hurled their many weapons---
Club, axe, discus, lance and *tomaram;*
Iron pestle, spear, *musundi,* three-leaves;
Stones from slings, *kappanam, kannakam*
Twice as ceaseless as unceasing rain! (48)

Lakshmana's arrows broke and scattered
All those weapons which were hurled
As if all the stars from heaven
Were coming down hiding the sky and the earth. (49)

The axles of a thousand chariots
Would be broken by a single shaft;
Leaping horses and their riders killed;
Chieftains' heads would roll on the ground;
Fire rise, and smoke, the world set ablaze! (50)

The base of a chariot would snap;
The wheels along with its axle snap;
The bow and armour of the man in it snap;
The flag, the parasol, the soldier's head-gear,
The drum and every other thing. (51)

Cut and scattered helter skelter
Nothing could be distinguished:
Limb from limb, chariot from horse,
King from commoner; one thing from another! (52)

Cut into bits and borne aloft by the arrows
Son's heads fell near fathers' chariots;
Fathers' heads likewise borne
Fell down near their sons' chariots! (53)

Hands wearing bracelets of *thumbai*.[3a]
Cut taking out arrows from quivers
Floated in a river of blood
Like red-eyed swordfish in the sea. (54)

Flags, parasols and the like
Driven by the cruel arrows
Into a river of blood
Resembled birds in a fearful sea. (55)

The devils ate with great relish
The corpses on the battlefield,
The sparks in the eyes of the dead
Serving as the fire to cook them.
And howdahs, arrows, chariots,
Bows and flags serving as faggots. (56)

Some chariots were scattered because their wheels broke;
Some broke down because their harnesses snapped;
Some rolled on the ground with their horses;
Some lost their drivers, and wandered derelict. (57)

The chariots massed together
With their glittering gems, and red with blood
Resembled the Rakshasas' houses in Lanka
Burning in the fire caused by the battle. (58)

At that time, Rama advanced Hanuman
And showered a rain of sharp arrows,
And all the chariots around were destroyed
And Ravana's son was isolated. (59)

3a. A flower worn by those engaged in a battle.

The sea of chariots with their horses and other beasts
Lay around like uprooted mountains;
And Indrajit, not retreating,
Looked angrily at the two men, (60)

"Will both of you fight me",
Said he looking angrily,
"Or just one and give up your life?
"Or will you attack me with all your force?
Let me know what you intend
And I will give you your deserts today". (61)

"I have sworn", said Lakshmana,
"That I singly will fight with you
With a sword, or a bow, or any other weapon,
Or wrestling, in order to kill you.
This will most certainly happen". (62)

"I will", said Indrajit, "out of turn
Make your elder born before you
Follow you in death; and make you
Born after him precede him in dying.
If I cannot do this". he asked,
"What use my birth to my father Ravana? (63)

"To prove how apposite your name is
I will make you the target of my arrows.[4]
Even if Siva himself should come
And intervene to save you,
I will render his valour vain.
This", he said, "your brother shall
Witness with his own eyes. (64)

4. Punning on the word *lakshya* which means a target.

"You two bowmen have reduced
Sixty *vellams* of Rakshasas
To nothing. But you will now see
Me reducing your seventy *vellams*
To nothing with my single bow
And making the world a desert. (65)

"I am not Kumbhakarna, Ravana's brother,
The one you killed in the battle,
But Ravana's son, alone and unique.
I will offer the blood of you two
As libation to my dead uncle and brothers." (66)

"There is Vibhishana here", said Lakshmana,
"To offer libation to everyone
Who bears the name of a Rakshasa;
And the ritual offerings you should make
To your father when he dies
He, in sorrow, will be making to you!" (67)

Then the Rakshasa, his heart boiling,
Filled the earth, the sky and the quarters
With burning arrows which would drink up
The milky sea of the monkey host
In a torrent twice or three times as much
As a rain which seems never to end. (68)

Ravana's youngster discharged
A thousand arrows at Angada,
Twice that number on Hanuman's body,
And countless others on the two lions,
Filling all the field with arrows. (69)

He showered those fierce arrows
On Lakshmana, Rama and the monkey heroes
Hot and torturing. For a full *naazhigai*[5]
His bow stood bent like the crescent moon. (70)

5. Twentyfour minutes.

His arrows hitting back, front and sides
Hot as the rays of the noonday sun,
The gods who saw his determined handiwork
Afraid closed their eyes, and shrank within themselves. (71)

Rama's lion cub entering quickly
Brushed aside all the missiles,
Answering *astra* with *astra*,
Like one dealing with a stupid lie. (72)

The great one standing behind him
Did not leave him, but would not fight
Thinking that that would be improper.
None saw either combatant prevailing.
Their shafts reached the sky, flaming like faggots. (73)

By the arrows sent by the two on all sides
Forests burnt; hills burnt; golden houses burnt;
The seas burnt, as well as the inside of clouds;
The whole world burnt as if at Dissolution. (74)

The brother of Rama the serpent-bedded[6]
Removed the flood of envenomed arrows
And shot dead the twice-fivehundred lions
Fierce like crocodiles drawing Indrajit's chariot. (75)

His chariot ruined, and none in reserve,
He resembled the sun minus its halo;
And raised the hot shower of his arrows
As though to destroy the very name of monkey.[7] (76)

Standing on his ruined chariot
He discharged countless arrows
On Angada's shoulders and Lakshmana's hands
And blew on his conch to the terror of the world. (77)

6. Rama identified with Vishnu; as frequently.
7. Adopting the Kazhakam reading.

Lakshmana, that maned lion,
Shot ten arrows which deprived
Indrajit of his armour of gold
And answered the blowing of his conch
With the twang of his own bow. (78)

The cloud-hued, his lotus eyes wet,
Flashing a smile like the crescent moon,
Ordered with the mouth which had swallowed
the worlds,
"Raise a shout", and the monkey heroes
Raised a shout to split the globe. (79)

Ere an eyelid could bat, he hid himself
In the sky; Lakshmana couldn't see him,
And told Rama, "If he survives
Our army will be utterly destroyed.
Let me use the *Brahmastra*". (80)

When that good one said it,
The great one replied to him:
"Ever righteous, if that Creator's missile
Is let loose, it will ruin the three worlds.
No one can stop it". and the sensible brother
Did not pursue that matter. (81)

That deceiver who had hidden himself,
Knowing their minds, decided that he
Himself would use that divine missile;
But thinking that the thing to do then
Was to quit for a little while
Repaired from there-and the gods
Assembled there laughed and rejoiced. (82)

When those fierce arrows, like red rain,
Disappeared like clouds blown high,
The monkey chiefs both angry and happy
Thought, "He has fled like a coward". (83)

The monkey army, broken and scattered,
Rolled back like the sea in floodtide,
Shouted, rose up and danced
And left the field; while the vanquished one,
Unseen by any, disappeared in Lanka,
A city perturbed like the sea when churned. (84)

Those doughty heroes seemed to forget
His nature who had decided,
"I will use the *Brahmastra*
Before they use it against me"
And had gone away to commence
The Vedic ritual prescribed for this. (85)

They descended from Hanuman's and Angada's
shoulders
And put away their bows, arrows, armours and
gloves,
And decided to take things easy
While the gods threw flowers, blessed and hurrahed. (86)

The hubbub of the monkeys disturbing the sky,
The sun in his chariot hurried to set.
"I don't wish to see the good one assailed
By the *Brahmástra*", he said to himself;
"I had better leave before that". (87)

"Our great army", said Rama,
"Fighting a big war day and night
Has grown thin. I would request,
Vibhishana, that you should bring
Some food for it quickly". (88)

"I will do it at once", said Vibhishana,
Bowed and departed with his friends,
And crossed the dark sea like the wind in a
naazhikai---
And Rama told his brother then: (89)

"We must obey the rules
And worship the divine *astras* properly.
I will go and do that.
Meanwhile please guard the army"---
And saying that he left the field. (90)

Indrajit went tc his father
And told him what had happened,
And how the enemy had thought
Of using the *Brahmastra* against him.
He wanted him to think about this.
And Ravana taken aback asked him,
"My dear, what should we do now?"
Tell me", and Indrajit told him. (91)

"Wise men tell us that if anyone
Is bent on killing us, we should if we can
Kill him first. It is best to send
The *Brahmastra* from a place of hiding
Unknown to them. That will be lawful. (92)

"If they get to know that I
Intend to use this missile
They will themselves use it
And thereby check me.
If they see me using it
Those ascetics can even kill me.
Nothing will happen just now.
I will first perform that yaga
And then put an end to their lives
In an instant", he concluded. (93)

"In order that they may forget me
Despatch against them ceaseless contingents.
I will do later what remains to be done",
Said he; and Ravana
Told Big Pot who stood beside him: (94)

"Brave one, take a division
Of one hundred *vellams* of spearmen
With Akampana and other chiefs
Uncountable like a heap of sesame
And wage a dreadful war with those men. (95)

"You by yourself, using your witchcraft
Can produce a fearful darkness
To triumph over the three worlds.
Go and drink up the lives of those foes
And render me that help", he said. (96)

The Rakshasa who had wondered what he would be
told
Shot up with joy at this command;
Went and ascended his chariot;
And the other Rakshasas gathered around him
Like musty elephants round a mountain. (97)

Crores and crores of hundreds of thousands
Of hefty elephants came section by section;
The chariots which came running were countless;
The leaping horses exceeded bounds. (98)

The weapons and the ornaments carried
Along with their flashing teeth
By the foot-soldiers marching like bulls
Spread moonlight and sunlight alternately. (99)

The tops of the flags which were carried
Reached the sky and scattered the clouds;
And the dust they raised by their tread
Went up and blinded Brahma's eyes. (100)

The must from those mountains called elephants
Running like the heavenly Ganges
Along with the foam from the horses' mouths
Dragged the trees and stones down
And in their plenitude joined the sea. (101)

Each time the Rakshasas---
Lips pouting, sword-fanged---
Shook the weapons in their hands
The gleams which arose spitting fire
Rose to the sky, like lightning. (102)

The city of Lanka discharging
The hundred *vellams* of the army
As ordered by Ravana
Resembled Agastya, the Tamil sage,
Who once swallowed the entire sea
And then as beseemed him, spat it out. (103)

The conches, drums, trumpets, cymbals,
The leaders' roars, the twangs of the bows,
The elephants' trumpetings, the horses' neighs
And the rattle of the chariots--- all of them
Swallowed the world as Vishnu of old! (104)

A huge army entered the field
And a huge army of monkeys met it;
And the missiles which the Rakshasas hurled
The monkeys countered with hills,
Shouting, threatening and roaring like thunder. (105)

By each of the hills crores on crores
Which the victorious monkeys hurled
The Rakshasas were killed in fours and fives;
And elephants, horses and chariots
Were hit, fell down and expired. (106)

Axes, spears, circles, *naanjils* and swords,
Trees, lances, goads, pillar-like clubs,
Vels, *kanayams* and arrows attacking them,
Monkeys in heaps rolled over and died. (107)

Mudgaras, pestles, *musundis*, *mulais*,
Wheels, *pindi* clubs, *kappanams*, discuses,
And stones out of slings were used to counter
The hills the monkeys hurled, and to kill them. (108)

The weapons which were used, bright and sharp,
Prevented the monkeys from going about;
The heaps of corpses and the rivers of blood,
Flowing all over, prevented the Rakshasas. (109)

All those who had been monkeys
Became gods again when killed;[8]
And the heavenly nymphs emaciated
Embraced and became one with them! (110)

The Rakshasas who deemed it their duty
To cheat, betray, deceive and steal
And were wholly devoid of mercy and dharma,
Were, by the power of Lakshmana's arrows
Sanctified and made into gods.[9]
What purity can be greater than this? (111)

---

8. The monkeys were all originally gods asked to assume that form so that they could prevail against Ravana whose boon gave no immunity against them.

9. A soldier dying in war went to Valhalla, and anyone killed by Vishnu was released from rebirth, and Lakshmana was an aspect of Vishnu.

Lakshmana shot the Yamastra
And sent his arrows at every face,
So that the Rakshasas with their moon-fangs,
Elephants and chariots all fell down,
And there was no space in Death's abode
To take them in and accommodate them! (112)

Hanuman managed to take in hand
A club left behind by Kumbhakarna
Dazzling like a diamond hill
Which once had driven away the gods
And could bend the earth by its might. (113)

"No wind! No fire" the gods exclaimed
As Hanuman transformed wielded that club
As if Death's rage personified
Was sweeping away with a terrific speed
Everyone who was present there! (114)

On the fierce-eyed, musty elephants,
  Swift horses, driven cars,
The massed men on foot,
  Their bodies and their heads,
He who knew all knowledge
  Plied that vigorous club,
So that they all wondered,
  "Is this the red-eyed one
Who, the Vedas declare,
  Is present in every spot,
And none of us can escape?" (115)

Those who rose up, and those he could catch,
  He tore, glaring at them;
He made that field into a mire,
  Grinding down bodies, destroying their shapes.
Even the gods who saw him
  Expanding in front of them,
Asked, "Is this the one who before
  Measured the universe in two steps?"[10] (116)

His body covered with the pearls
  Which dropped from the broken heads of
                    elephants,
His head reaching the sky
  And piercing the clouds,
He stood like Mount Meru
  At Dissolution
When the wind blows, and the stars shelter on it,
  Its top once circled by the sun! (117)

With that lovely club in his hand
  He rose and beat about as if
Anything that had any form
  On earth or in heaven was to be powdered!
Destroying that army, huge like the sea,
  Musty elephant, chariot, horse---
All rendered into a soup
  Which he drank up, and after that
Raised a shout at ruining the enemy! (118)

10. Vishnu as Trivikrama.

In less than half an hour
He ground a hundred thousand
Musty elephants in a river of blood
And made them into a mire.
He killed the Rakshasas who attacked him
Like a thousand maned lions,
And traversed that field like a *diggaja*
Which had run amok and was bent on killing. (119)

He twirled his club and knocked together
All those bulls who came riding
Chariots, horses, irate elephants
And rained their arrows--- skilful folk
Who had gained fame in previous fights
And entered this one to attack him---
And sent them speedily to heaven. (120)

All the army chieftains--
Sugriva, Nila, Angada,
Kumudha, Jambavan and Panasa---
Inspired anew to fight
Entered the field again
And, not seeing one another,
Merged in the sea of battle! (121)

Hanuman going into the *vellams*
  Of the Rakshasa host,
A very sea which he scattered
  With his hands from port to port---
Strding about like old Narasimha
  But armed with a club instead of nails.
Came across Akampana
  Whose life and joy were fighting! (122)

He came in a chariot drawn
  By a thousand mountainous donkeys
And swifter than the mind.
  A bowman formerly Taraka,
A murderous Asura,
  Who had been killed by Skanda,
And now in his present birth
  In the form of a Rakshasa. (123)

"Apart from Indra, Vishnu and Siva,
If anyone should fight with this monkey,
This", he said, "Will be the one
Who will prove the Death of him. (124)

"If I do not oppose him
What will happen to this world
Surrounded by the seven seas?
The gods will not take him on
And the very name of Rakshasa gone!"
So raining a shower of arrows,
He came in anger--- and Hanuman,
His hefty shoulders touching the stars,
Came quickly forward to meet him. (125)

When the hero with the gold anklets came
Crowding round him with his chariots,
Elephants, horses and infantry,
As if the day of Dissolution
Had come with cloud, fire and wind,
Hanuman the diamond-shouldered
Whirled the valorous club in his hand. (126)

All the numerous weapons
Which were struck, flung, aimed, shot,
Rained and otherwise despatched
Were broken by that club, and trampled underfoot,
So that the gods leapt with joy,
And those who did not know it before
Learnt that day the lesson of the club. (127)

In the very sight of Akampana,
He who was like the mountain Meru
Unvexed by the tempest of Dissolution,
Destroyed ten crores of elephants,
Bridled horses, sharp-toothed Rakshasas
And well-yoked chariots. (128)

"Today I will send this one to heaven,
Bring victory to the King of Lanka,
Defeat those men and distress the gods",
Said the Rakshasa and went forward;
And Hanuman bade him welcome! (129)

Akampana took in the field;
Closed tight his cavernous mouth;
And fire darting from his eyes
Urged his flagged chariot on.
He shot off a shower of arrows
Thrice as torrential as rain
And, making a noise like thunder,
Dashed against that hill called Hanuman! (130)

Then he rained on his shoulders and chest
A shower of gold-tipped arrows,
Thundering, darting fire,
Flighted with eagle feathers
Which had scraped the chests of gods! (131)

Exhausted by the blood which flowed
From the hole in his chest and shoulders
Which were made by those arrows,
And being yet not quite recovered,
Hanuman with his valorous club
Demolished the chariot
With the mules drawing it, and its driver. (132)

"This one cannot be defeated with a bow",
Felt that Rakshasa, loud as the sea,
Mighty-shouldered, made of darkness;
And seized a club sharp and powerful
Made by the workman of the gods.[11] (133)

They attacked each other; turned right and left;
Shouted as at Dissolution;
Slapped their shoulders; stooped and rose;
Whirled up and down to quell each other;
Came together and withdrew. (134)

Slapped their shoulders, and clasped each other;
Leapt up and came down
Rained blows all over;
Attacked and defended themselves;
Swore at each other and no longer
Going round and round, went straight. (135)

When the enemy of lies tried to punch
The friend of darkness in his chest,.
That sinner used his club to ward it---
Whereupon crashed to the ground
Both the club and the hand wielding it ! (136)

---

11. Viswakarma, the heavenly architect, blacksmith and general tactotum.

When those two fell, like a storm-tossed sea,
The sinner struck with his left hand
Hanuman on his chapleted chest,
And the noise produced by that blow
Was like thunder on a mountain! (137)

Looking at the one who gave that blow,
Hanuman, although he held
A club in his hand which was like thunder,
Didn't use it against one unarmed;
He merely closed his mouth and gave
A blow on his chest with his left hand,
And Akampana at once vomitted blood
As if he had earlier imbibed it! (138)

Swinging that same hand again,
He felled him with a blow at his ear,
And sent him up to the gods in heaven;
And the Rakshasas who were all around
Scattered in every direction
Like beasts in a forest seeing a lion. (139)

Akampana fell dead on the floor;
The Rakshasa army also fell;
The monkey heroes escaped alive;
And the arrows which Lakshmana shot
Killed the elephants, broke the chariots,
And cut into pieces the horses drawing them. (139 a)

But Hanuman with his mountainous shoulders
Had to carry a mountain of sorrow
Because he could not hear
The clamour of anyone,
Nor the thunder of the twang of Lakshmana's bow,
Nor know what had happened to whom---
There being no one to tell him. (140)

Angada went seven leagues
South-west of the spread Rakshasa horde;
Sugriva went in the same direction
Twice the distance Angada covered;
And Rama's brother went beyond
Four times the length Sugriva covered. (141)

The rest warring covered nine leagues;
But while the monkey army
Spread like moss upon water,
Hanuman after his victory
Went towards Lakshmana falling short
By just two or three *gaathams*.[12] (142)

Depressed at not finding Lakshmana
And moving with the speed of the *pralaya*[13] wind.,
He nevertheless felt he would be reaching him
When he saw various cheery signs. (143)

He saw the tusks of elephants,
Peacock-feather parasols, gem-set necklaces,
Gold, pearls and weapons scattered
Like so many fish in a river
And white umbrellas being swept
In a big river of blood. (144)

He saw arrows in every direction
With the severed heads of the Rakshasas
Hittting the sky and falling down again
With a noise which made the world tremble
And sounding like the rain of stones
At the time of Dissolution. (145)

---

12. Leagues, being about ten miles each.

13. The Dissolution.

He saw the weapons of the Rakshasas
In reply to Lakshmana's arrows
Falling from heaven as it were
With lighted heads, like stars from the sky
Dispelling the darkness
Like forest trees set afire. (146)

He saw the shafts of that gracious prince
Flying in the sky by themselves
And looking like the flaming hair
Of the god with eight hands dancing in the dark [14]
In a cremation ground to the delight of the gods. (147)

He saw a forest of headless corpses
Blood spurting out of them
As if they were lamps which were lit
With ghee, by the dark evening
In order to light the way
For the one it knew to be the King. (148)

He saw the chariots, elephants and horses---
All of them without their men---
Which could not be counted in days without end,
Running distraught and utterly tired,
Like the subjects in a land
Ruled by a lawless tyrant. (149)

He saw seas of blood, forests of weapons,
And heaven-touching hills of corpses
Of those killed by the hero
With the rain of arrows he let fly
Thrice as powerful as rain from the sky. (150)

---

14. Siva

Whirling and churning like Dissolution's typhoon
And leaping across the seas of blood,
Hanuman heard the twang of a bow
As if the globe had been torn to tatters,
And raised a noise like Dissolution's sea. (151)

Hanuman approached hearing that twang
And happy that he could now hear
All the news, went and bowed to him;
And Lakshmana clasped that lover of Victory, (152)

And asked, "Where are all the monkey heroes?
How did Sugriva part with you?
Where is Angada now?
Because of the darkness which overcame the army
I know nothing. Please tell me".
And hands clasped on his head, he replied: (153)

"Except, Sir, that I saw
Those going who went away,
I have no idea what happened in the fight.
We shall know only when they return",
So said the one who had leaped over the sea
Not only of water but also of learning. (154)

"There is a mantra, Sir, with whose help
All this deception can be ended.
You can, if you like, make use of it.
This trickery of our enemies
Can be countered only with divine help.
Else none of your men will reach you", he said. (155)

"I will do that", said that renowned bowman;
Invoked Rama, chose his weapon,
And choosing the one sacred to Siva
Who used Mount Meru as his bow,
Shot that shaft at the Rakshasas. (156)

When he shot that Siva missile,
The Rakshasa army was burnt at once
Not a creature escaping,
As if a bamboo forest had been
Set ablaze by Dissolution's fire.
The darkness everywhere was lifted
And the gods too lost their mental darkness! (157)

When Pot Belly saw that the divine missile
Had been employed, and the darkness lifted.
He just disappeared; and all those monkeys
Who had fled away earlier, returned
Joining the elephant calf, Lakshmana,
Shouting and putting the clouds to flight
And dancing in their happiness. (158)

Delighted at each sight that no one had been injured
Rama's brother had his doubts set at rest;
The monkey guard mixed happily with him.
The gods rained flowers, and the spies ran away. (159)

They went to Ravana and told him all.
"You must simply have fled", he said.
"Is it possible that one bowman
Could kill a hundred *vellams* of Rakshasas
Along with all the elephants?"
"He used Siva's missile", they said.
"If so," said Ravana, "it is possible". (160)

"Go and tell this to my son", said he,
And the spies ran and told him;
And he, taken aback, asked them,
"Where were Rama, Hanuman and others?
Vibhishana? Tell me quickly". (160 a)

"Rama wasn't there but on another mountain;
Your uncle, so canny about witchcraft,
Had gone to get the delayed food.
Hurry up, Sir, this is what happened".
"Where is Big Pot?" "Up in the air".
"Oh, how wonderful!" said Indrajit. (161)

"This is the time", thought Ravana's son,
And repaired quickly to a banian tree;
And the heretical Rakshasa Brahmins
Brought together what was needed for a sacrifice. (162)

His arrows provided the fuel for the sacrifice;
He strewed many big *thumbai* flowers;
Poured black sesame, killed a black goat
With its horns and teeth intact;
Its flesh and blood and a lot of ghee
Fed the sacrificial fire. (163)

He saw that the fire diffusing fragrance
Went left to right--- an auspicious omen;
And convinced that victory on the field would ensue
The scion of that cruel race rose in the sky. (164)

By the might of his magic he went up;
Saturn in conjunction with his birth star---
And disappeared in the sky
Where even the gods and sages couldn't spot him (165)

Pot Belly at that very time
Thought of a stratagem; in the guise of Indra,
He took his seat on Airavatam,
To wage a war against the monkeys
With the sages and gods as his allies. (166)

Not only the Rakshasas, men and monkeys,
But all things living in the world
Seemed because of his magic
To have joined in the fray:
And the monkeys, seeing this, were frightened. (167)

"The one on the four-tusked elephant white
Is surely Indra", the monkeys worried.
The rest are the gods and thoughtful sages.
What have we done to provoke their wrath?" (168)

The brother of the one who had put away his discus
To take in hand a bow instead
Looked at Hanuman's radiant face
And said, "Say quickly, what wrong have we done
To incur the wrath of the sages and the gods?" (169)

That very time Lakshmana was shot
By the ancient *astra* sacred to Brahma
And in an instant innumerable arrows
Pierced his body like a flock of sparrows
Pecking at the golden Meru. (170)

Crores and crores of cruel arrows
Pierced his body and covered it completely;
And he fell down unconscious
Like a great big tusker gone to sleep. (171)

"Why has Indra done this?"
Thought Hanuman, "What now?
I will throw him out, elephant and all"
And rose to do so. But the thousand crores
Of arrows sticking into him
Made him unconscious and fall flat on the ground. (172)

The Sun's son bathed in blood
Like a hill of gold with a *palasa*[15] forest.
Giddy with the cruel arrows
Piercing him in every place,
His eyes red like molten copper
Also fell and measured the ground. (173)

Angada pierced by ten thousand arrows
Fell down like a lion prostrated by thunder;
And the renowned Jambavan,
His chest and shoulders pierced, collapsed. (174)

Nila, pierced by a thousand arrows
Fell and encountered Yama's face;
Idaba took flight to heaven;
Panasa fell to a shaft like venom;
And Kumuda died because of the shaft
Yama was in love with. (175)

A thousand arrows killed the bridger of the sea;[16]
Both the equal of Vali[17] and his brother[18] died;
Gavaya fierce like Death reached heaven;
Kesari pierced by a garland of arrows
Fell down and kissed the earth. (176)

Hit by a thousand shafts Kanaka reached heaven;
Sanaaka, the same as Anaaga, also died;
Satavali died pierced by an arrow;
And Thamba hit rolled like a hill on the ground. (177)

---

15. A plant with red leaves.
16. Nila
17. Mainda.
18. Duminda.

Satavali,[19] his shoulders like the Vindhyas,
Sushena, Vinata, Gandamadana,
Idumba and Dadimukha,
Crores of arrows entering their bodies
Lost consciousness and fell to earth. (178)

All the other heroes, utterly destroyed
By the rain of the sharp arrows,
The blood released joined the sea,
One arrow disposing of a thousand monkeys.[20] (179)

The great Brahmastra nailed all of them down;
They had no place in which to hide;
The thundering arrows which were broadcast
Seemed to fix one to the ground.
The monkeys were completely finished! (180)

They lay on the ground while the heavenly nymphs
Blue-eyed went over them.
The blood which flowed made the field look
Like a milky sea with a coral island! (181)

The monkey army went to heaven,
And the gods there welcomed them as guests;
They were happpy to mix with them,
But told them, "Get back this instant. (182)

"You have honoured the Creator's missile,
But you are not subject to death.
Even those who are slaves of Rama's slaves
Will get their salvation while still on earth. (183)

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19. This name mentioned in the previous verse would indicate that that verse, not found in all the versions of the Kamba Ramayanam is rightly thought of as interpolated by the editor of the Swaminatha Aiyar version.

20. Or a thousand splendid arrows disposing of the monkeys.

"You went to earth to do our work;
Your lives are as dear to us as to you;
Only your bodies are now different;
You died for the sake of the Lotus-eyed.
You are our lords", said the gods. (184)

"The younger has died with the monkey crew",
Jeered Indrajit, "Rama hasn't come here".
He blew his conch and reached fast his father
And informed him of all that had happened. (185)

"Is that Rama dead?" asked Ravana,
"He had gone somewhere," replied his son,
"Otherwise when his brother was slain,
His best friends killed, and his army scattered,
Would he have just stood by and watched?" (186)

"That must be so", the Rakshasa said;
And his son went to his palace.
Pot Belly despatched by Ravana returned,
While my Lord, Rama, in another place, (187)

His palms red as fresh lotuses
With the worship he had offered to all the missiles
With his heart and as laid down,
Said, "Let me now go to the field". (188)

Grasping a flaming arrow in his hand,
He put an end to the darkness around;
Reached the field on his lotus feet
And opened his eyes quickly on it. (189)

He looked one by one in each direction,
Blood coming out of his eys;
Saw the corpses spread around,
And scanned the face of each of his friends. (190)

He looked at Sugriva, and his lotus eyes
Filled with tears; he sighed deep;
"How can you do this?" he asked,
His mind depressed; looked sideways
And saw the condition of Hanuman. (191)

"Was it for this you crossed the sea
Entered Lanka and shook the Rakshasas
In their very entrails
So as to rid me of my troubles?
Did the arrow shot by the enemy
Kick back his bowstring and enter your body
To lay you low?" he asked, crying. (192)

"The boons of the gods, the sages' prophecies,
Sita's blessings have all gone amiss,
All because of my past sins!
Who so miserable as I?" he wailed. (193)

"What did I gain by agreeing
To take on the mean job of a king?
I killed my father, diminished the days
Of my other father Jatayu---
And today I live while so many
Heroes, my friends, are all dead!
Is there no limit to my wickedness? (194)

"I killed the elder and gave the chiefdom
To the younger brother. I seem to have done
Nothing but destruction.
By my forbearance I have only
Brought you all to this condition.
I have taken life only to be
A burden to this earth", he said. (195)

He saw as it were a bull among bulls,
Angada, that young elephant;
Eyes darting fire, "A sinner I
Bear weapons", he said, "and lo! the way
I look after and guard my trust!" (196)

He saw his brother Lakshmana
Lying on a heap of corpses,
His body pierced by numerous arrows
Which with the blood which was around
Seemed to throw a beam of light.
And it reminded him of the days
When he reclined on the milky ocean
Borne by the serpent Adisesha. (197)

His heart swelled with sorrow;
He boiled with rage; he breathed out smoke;
Then seemed to shrink in body and mind;
Dharma seemed to pound its eyes;
He drooped like a tree struck down by lightning. (198)

He didn't breathe for a long while;
Did not seem to feel anything;
He neither perspired, nor opened his eyes;
The frightened gods asked, "Has he collapsed?"
He moved neither his hands nor his feet.
Born for others out of his grace
He seemed as if he was all but dead! (199)

There was none to support him,
None to lift his clasping hand;
None to console him with words;
All his partners had been killed.
This was the fate he had to suffer.
Who bothers about the lonely? (200)

No living things were seen on that field
Except the headless torsos and devils,
Crowds of red-eyed women who
Searched for their husbands' bodies;
The happy retainers of Kaali,
And rows of ravening jackals! (201)

The heavenly nymphs beat their stomachs and cried
Shedding tears like ceaseless rain;
The gods too joined them.
All things also, living and moving
Being but his manifestations,
The Lord of wisdom, melted and trembled. (202)

Brahma and Siva ceased to smile;
Tears of sympathy fell from them.
Why talk of those allied and alike
When sin and enmity sympathised? (203)

Rama, consciousness returning,
Opened his eyes a little and looked
At Lakshmana more carefully.
"He has gone to heaven and won't return",
He said, his heart wilting
As if a flame had entered a sore
And broke into a lamentation, (204)

" I lost my father, but did not die;
Took back the kingdom I had given Bharata
Because with you I thought I could rule it;
I was never alone when you were about.
But now your voice cannot be heard.
I come, I come! I cannot live! (205)

"You are my mother, my father, my penance;
You are my son, my brother, my fortune;
You have left me unconcerned with praise,
While I stay here harder of heart than you! (206)

"I see no life in your split body
And yet I live and cry and bear my burden!
O lion, who knows I still may survive!
O wretched me! Why is my heart not split? (207)

"For fourteen years in the forest
You sought food for me in the sun,
Yourself not eating. Are you now
Sleeping, tired out? Will you not wake? (208)

"That we two trusting each other wholly
Were one, not two, has now been disproved
By me the wicked and heartless sinner.
I have lost you, and am still alive.
When again will my life join yours? (209)

"I went to that yaga, strung that bow, and thought
That the venom I gained there would give me life
I got it and thereby all my kinwere burnt
After causing all that evil have I reformed? (210)

"Through my love of land I have caused
Such distress to my mother and others
As fire that is placed in a wound.
And through my love of woman I have got
What I have now got.
How great the fame I have acquired!
Who says my station is humble? (211)

"You are dead, and I will not live;
Bharata then will not be king;
All our kinsmen unable to bear
Such sorrow will die in a heap.
Must my relenting for the sake of virtue[21]
Lead inevitably to this? (212)

"You gave up all for my sake---
Mother, father, relations,
Your own responsibilities,
Never forgetting me,
You followed me not only in birth
But throughout life you wouldn't leave me.
And now you *have* left me;
How can I bear this and live on? (213)

"When a virtuous woman is immured
By a tyrannical Rakshasa,
And Dharma instead of destroying him
Goes over to his side,
If the three worlds are still left standing
What evidence is that of the strength of my bow? (214)

"Has all my might been expended
Only on a ditch called a sea,
Viradha, a fast flying crow,
Khara, dry trees rotten at the root,
And the like of Vali? (215)

"Should I not have stayed here
And killed Indrajit and the others?
I left this to you, and am now doing nothing.
I cannot call myself your brother,
Nor do I deserve to live, (216)

---

21. Referring to his dissuading Lakshmana from using the Brahmastra. Vide verse 81.

"My dear, I am anxious to see
My mother, our kinsmen, the land and the Brahmins,
All of whom must be worrying about us.
I am tired. Come back and crown me! (217)

"When the serpent noose encircled you
And the enemy laid you low,
I was not with you, I had walked away.
I did what the loveless would have done.
Won't the world laugh at my pursuit of victory? (218)

"I gave a kingdom to Vibhishana that day
And will die now without keeping my promise;
I have learnt to lie, and brought discredit
To my clan: Myself have murdered
My reputation--- lost all my feelings." (219)

So he wailed, on and on; sobbed and sighed;
And all his senses now one with his heart
Clasped tight his brother who seemed dead,
Lost speech and sense, and fell asleep. (220)

The gods saw this, beat their eyes, and cried;
They were distressed, not knowing its end;
"O Sir, you are unhappy only for us.
How can *you* have grief?" they fondly asked. (221)

"O you, beyond all joy and sorrow!
We do not know your true self
Nor how the world is absorbed by you,
We know no future, past or present
Exactly as they really are.
We can only bow to you and walk
In the way which you have chalked out.
What else is there for us to do? (222)

"Cut at the root of the Rakshasa clan
And rid us of our sorrows', we begged;
And out of mercy towards us
You put on these unapt forms
And chose to be born in a royal house.
Come to take down the burden of Dharma,
Must you try to delude us too? (223)

"We live in the hope that you who were
Born in a royal family
Have come out of your grace for us
To wipe out the three worlds' sorrow;
And yet for a while you have made us forget
And think, This is not He, but a man
What a nonsuch deception is this!
O Lord, have you too learnt to lie? (224)

"O the Supreme!Like the spider
Which can spin the finest thread
Out of itself, and make a web
And can then withdraw it all,
You will never cease to make
And unmake these various worlds,
All lives, inside and out
Which you will swallow and then spit out! (225)

"Though this is indeed a sorrowful play,
Since sorrow can never touch you,
To you it is only a joyful sport.
But in us, who are in the dark,
Anything hurtful which happens to you
Breeds love, breeds pity and breeds sorrow,
All which only you can remove---
O you, without beginning, middle or end' (226)

"O you, who seem so easy to know
And yet are incomprehensible,
We lost our fear, thinking that you
Have come to us; and now before
Your task is done, you are put to grief
And we are therefore much distressed.
You can save us even in our mother's womb.
If you will not help us now---
You with Fortune on your chest---
How can we know what you intend? (227)

"In the hope, Lord, that you will
Show us the grace that you had shown
To Ambariksha[22] and to Brahma's son,[23]
We came to you for protection.
Yourself distressed, you have withdrawn
And put us all to greater grief.
Friend to your brother, will you not
Avoid all this and restore our sense?" (228)

Saying many things like this,
Even the gods were deep distressed;
And he who had come to succor those
Whose lot it is to feel distress
In his love as one of them
Lay unconscious on the ground---
And the mean and sinful Rakshasas
Went with the news to Ravana. (229)

---

22. A King who was persecuted unreasonably by the angry sage Durvasas from whom Vishnu saved him by sending his discus after the sage.

23. Siva who was saved once from an Asura who, gifted with a boon by him, threatened to destroy him with that very boon; and another time, from the consequences of his having cut off one of his father Brahma's heads.

"Why have you come?" asked the Rakshasa King,
And they replied, "In the war which was waged
Your son with his shaftts shot all the chiefs down
Including Lakshmana, the younger brother;
And the elder not brooking this paradox
Has in his sorrow died too;
Now therefore your foes are all dead and departed!" (230)

"Why have you come?" asked the Rakshasa King.
And they replied, "In the war which was waged
Your son with his shafts slew all the chiefs down
Including Lakshmana, the younger brother.
And the elder not brooking this boredom
Lies in his sorrow-died too:
Now therefore your foes are all dead and departed!" (230)

22. SITA IN THE FIELD

Knowing that his spies would not
  Carry a lie to him;
That sinner exulting with joy
  Scattered his treasures
Until those who received them
  Cried, "Hold, enough!";
And ordered that what had happened
  Should be proclaimed
With the beat of drums mounted on elephants,
  And his subjects commanded
To celebrate the happy event
  By taking an oil bath! (1)

While they carried out those orders
  He sent for Marutta and said,
"Go first, and sweep the Rakshasa corpses
  All into the sea.
If anyone knows of this order
  Except yourself
Your head, and all I have given you,
  Will also be swept off".
And obeying that order he
  Filled the sea with those corpses. (2)

"Take Sita in the aerial car
And show her what happened to her men;
Unless she sees it with her own eyes
The doubts in her mind won't depart".
And the Rakshasa maidens so ordered
Went making a great noise
To Sita growing desperate,
And flew her over the battlefield. (3)

She saw wide-eyed her husband's form
And nothing else;
As one who had drained venom, she lost
Her body, sense and life.
Like a tender lotus thrown in the fire
She was undone.
Does not a woman crushed affect
The whole wide world? (4)

When she cried, heaven's peacock maids
Cried with her;
The koel, consort of the Bull-rider[1]
Cried with her;
Lakshmi, the lotus-maid cried with her
As Ganga and Saraswati;
Durga, sister of Krishna, cried;
And even the heartless Rakshasis. (5)

The Earth, the goddess who had borne
That golden girl, saw and cried;
The Vedas, standing ever erect,
And Dharma struck a body blow
Wilted and cried again and again.
Even the sins ever dogging cried---
Why say more about others?
Those who stood cried standing---
While she collapsed, sense gone and breath! (6)

The Rakshasa maids sprinkling water
Raised her who had lost her sense and breath;
And after a long while regaining herself
She was filled with misery.
She saw her cloud-hued husband's body
And in her rage pounded her eyes---
Lotus hand belabouring
Sharp and flashing carp eyes! (7)

---

1. Parvati, wife of Siva.

She beat her nipples and her stomach;
Cried and prayed, and wilted like a sprig
Thrown into a fire; boiled; was afraid;
Shrank; quivered like lightning;
Breathed hard; wailed; leapt--- that koel
Drinking distress mixed with her breath. (8)

She fell down, rolled, perspired all over;
Sighed and wilted; rose and sat;
Crackled her knuckles; laughed; yearned;
"My husband!" she called out, "King of Ayodhya!
Whose feet all the world should touch!"
Felt disheartened, and began to wail. (9)

"O Dharma, instead of being friendly
To one who had such love for you,
Have you been subjugated
By those with whom he would have no truck.
O cruel one, is this your grace? (10)

"Can you not see, O cruel Fate,
The distress we suffer who have never departed
From the path laid down by the ancient Vedas?
Never, never shall you have my esteem,
Being so false and playing with us! (11)

"O Death, I cannot bear this sight,
But you won't seize me: is it right, is it right?
My very life, my gracious Lord,
You have flung me into a night without dawn! (12)

"Have I survived all this while
Only to clasp your cut-up body?
The life of this earth! the strength of heaven!
My darling! Nectar! the ever-merciful! (13)

"Did you, divine one, take my hand---
A sinner's before the fire at Mithila,
Only that you might get thereby
Ill luck? Essence of the Vedas
And nectar to the Lotus Maid? (14)

"The great Kausalya will not live;
The younger ones[2] will also die;
Was this the plot the cruel Kaikeyi
Hatched cleverly, my great tusker? (15)

"Told, 'You must leave this fair city'[3],
How you left it, followed a deer,
Fought against so many in the smoky forest,
And how little love I have shown you! (16)

"'If you will not fetch that deer
For me here today', I said,
'I will die'[4], and as a result
How I was left, and you were plunged
In a long war whose evil I didn't foresee! (17)

"You would have conducted many yagas
With lots of ghee, and ruled the land
With its many lovely rivers.
But your words and fate were falsified
Because you took me for your wife! (18)

---

2. Bharata and Satrughna.

3. This is what Kaikeyi told Rama. The line could also be interpreted, "Told by you I must stick in the city How I refused, and as a result, You followed a deer" etc.

4. Adopting the Kazhakam reading.

"O wise one, the younger! Have you but too well
Followed your mother's injunction
When we, fated, left for the forest,
'You must die before he does'? (19)

"Did you abandon a princely bed
Of luxurious flowers and sprigs
Only to rest on a bed of arrows
Provided by wicked and cruel men?[5] (20)

"My heart seems too hard to yield
Even to a hatchet or sword
And I stay here just weeping and wailing.
No more. To assuage my sorrow
I will fall on his body and die", she said.
But Trijata held her back and said: (21)

Like a penance gathered in her past,
And eager to end her confusion,
She removed the Rakshasis crowding round her
And clasping her lovely as a doll
Whispered in her ears as follows: (22)

"Will you, my mother, not remember
How they sent that deer in the past,
Cut up Janaka, used the snake noose,
And decide to go and kill yourself?
Have you still not understood
The witchcraft of these wicked men? (23)

---

5. Addressed to Lakshmana who never used a bed during the fourteen years in the forest.
Stanza 18 addressed to Rama appears illogically in the Gopalakrishnamachariar edition after 20 here.

"Do not forget the dreams I have had,
The auspicious omens, your chastity,
The events in the Dandakaranya
And the heroism of that pillar of Dharma.
Can these mean wretches kill the lotus-eyed Lord? (24)

"Don't you see, poor thing,
That there is no arrow in Rama's body,
And Lakshmana's face is bright like the sun
Of Dissolution? There is no danger
Of death for him. With your miraculous birth
Don't be deluded for nothing! (25)

"If Rama had died, the fourteen worlds
Would have gone up in smoke.
Will that sun be still shining?
What will happen to the gods?
All life from Brahma down would have gone.
Don't be afraid. Since they are all there
He too is there, and so is Dharma. (26)

"By your boon, dear maid,
Hanuman will have no death,
Unless your chastity is doubtful.[6]
To think on these lines is quite wrong.
The Brahmastra will weaken at once.
Can the gods make a mistake? (27)

"I saw the gods. They saw these two,
And hands clasped above their heads
As if before the Trinity,
Are quite happy, not perturbed.
Therefore, Mother, don't be afraid.
Do not imagine that a well
Can ever contain an ocean. (28)

6. Sita, swearing by her chastity, had blessed Hanuman with deathlessness.

"This divine chariot will not bear
Widows and dead bodies;
That being so, cross the sea of your sorrow",
Said she, and Sita, resumed her life.
Relieved somewhat of her doubts, (29)

"Mother, whatever you have said
Has never in the past proved false.
I look upon you as a goddess
And so have managed to live so long.
I will live through this night.
As for my death, has that not been
Ordained already?" said she
Who had left her lotus to come to the earth. (30)

"I lost my shame and bade adieu
To the virtues of a modest woman,
And yet have lived only in the hope
That I could see again my Rama,
That bowman with the heavenly hue.
As for this worthless body of mine
I can cast it away any moment", she added. (31)

They took up and put in the chariot,
Her whose spear-eyes had pierced Rama ---
Death's stupid henchmen fleeting with the corpse
And leaving the living soul behind! (32)

"This divine chariot will not bear
Widows and dead bodies!
That belong to, cross the sea of your sorrow"
Said she, and Sita, resumed her life
Relieved somewhat of her doubts. (29)

"Mother, whatever you have said
Has never in the past proved false.
I look upon you as a goddess
And so have managed to live so long.
I will live through this night.
As for my death, has that not been
Ordained already?" said she
Who had left her home to come to the earth. (30)

"I lost my shame and bade adieu
To the virtues of a modest woman
And yet have lived only in the hope
That I could see again my Rama,
That bowman with the heavenly bow.
As for this worthless body of mine
I can cast it away any moment", she added. (31)

They took up and put in the chariot
Her whose spear-eyes had shed tears
Death's sword henchmen [illegible] with the corpse
And leaving the living world behind.

23. THE MEDICINE MOUNTAIN

The maiden departed, and Vibhishana
As ordered by Rama, the God of gods,
Turned up with the appropriate food,
Had it stored, and came to the field. (1)

He looked and saw how the monkey heroes
Had all been felled, as if by a curse
Of the Creator, and stood transfixed
As though he had himself partaken of poison
And lost his consciousness. (2)

Ignorant of what had happened,
He wailed, grew hot, sighed again and again,
Grew faint, and hovered as if at death's door.
Then as the devils, dogs and jackals
Ran away, he went and saw
Where Rama was lying with his brother. (3)

Bone, flesh and blood cannot be second
Foregoing their primacy;
Love may come first but is a puzzle
A mystery to the very gods![1] (4)

Still, knowing that these could not die,
He himself did not; made no lament;
Only sighed, and his heart aflame
Scanned Rama carefully, saw no wounds,
Was assuaged and ceased to shiver. (5)

1. Cf the Kural 73: "The soul, they say, is clothed in bones That human love may be". Since it is not possible to make love without a body, the soul has to be encased in bones. Cf Browing: *Rabbi ben Ezra*: XII and Donne: The *Extasie*.

He realised quickly that this was caused
By the Brahmastra released by Indrajit,
And that Rama's state was the result
Of his anguish over Lakshmana,
And revolving his thoughts over and over
Sought a way out of all this. (6)

"Rama must have fainted because of his grief;
When he wakes up, we will know what to do;
He will not live if his brother dies.
Have those cheats then won?" he asked,
His eyes shedding a rain of tears. (7)

"As the serpent noose was loosened,
So this *astra* will collapse today;
There is no danger to our brother;
The army overwhelmed here will survive.
How can the wicked triumph?" he asked,
And felt a little stabilised. (8)

"Before they recover, let me probe
And find out who alive can help me
Quickly", he said, and a firebrand holding
Waded with speed the river of blood,
Working all by himself. (9)

He saw Hanuman the sea-crosser
With his mouth folded, hands held fast,
Fire issuing from his red eyes,
His gold-hill shoulders touching the sky,
Lying in wrath on a bed of dead elephants
Numbering a thousand crore! (10)

He saw him, and his eyes raining tears
Was convinced that he was still alive,
And withdrew carefully one by one
The shafts which had pierced him,
Brought down water from the clouds
And cooled with it his handsome face. (11)

His breath regained, hair bristling,
Hanuman perspired, opened his eyes,
And rolled over a little. His mouth watered,
He hiccuped, uttered and blessed
The name of Rama, and the gods hurrahed! (12)

Vibhishana, crying but happy,
Clasped him with love, and he did likewise.
"Is our Lord well, worthy one?"
He asked, "He is", said the other,
And Hanuman the Pure whom the three worlds could worship
Turned and bowed in Rama's direction. (13)

"His love for his brother has made him unconscious,
And in his grief he is fast asleep.
When he wakes up, we shall know what to do",
Said Vibhishana, and thereupon
Asked Hanuman, "Where is Jambavan,
The one whose like is only himself?" (14)

"I don't know. I haven't seen him,
Have no notion if he is alive or dead.
I have just come", said the Rakshasa King,
And the son of the Wind god replied to him,
"He cannot die, let us look for him. (15)

"King of all the Rakshasas,
If we find him, I am sure
He will show us the way to revive"
Said Hanuman, and "We are saved", said Vibhishana.
"Let us hurry" and with a few steps in the dark
The two of them joined Jambavan. (16)

Though age, the distress caused by the arrows
And grief at the loss of his friends
Had made him breathless, and his mind a blank,
That doughty one made out with his ears
That footfalls were approaching him. (17)

"Vibhishana? my Lord Rama? or Hanuman?
Or some merciful gods, or sages?
Our enemies functioning in the dark
Having won, have disappeared.
Only friends can be coming now",
He thought, and felt his grief assuaged. (18)

To them coming near and shedding their tears
Like falls from a hill, he said consoling,
"O endlessly good, who are you?"
And heard Vibhishana's voice proclaim,
"Sir, we are saved! We are saved indeed"! (19)

"Who is the one beside you?" he asked,
And when Hanuman replied,
"Hail hero! I am Hanuman
Accept my bow", that strong one,
His great joy raising him up,
Said, "We are none of us dead then;
All of us are up, are up". (20)

"Even though it is Brahma's weapon,
I knew", said he, "that it can do
Nothing to Rama, the ever-victorious
And the essence of the Vedas.
What, tell me, has it done to him?"
"Our Lord", said Vibhishana, "is asleep
Plunged in a sea of sorrow". (21)

"Seeing the other's state, how can he rest?
Their bodies are two, but their life is one,
Being at the root the same.
Diamond Shoulders, do not tarry,
But go and get in the twinkling of an eye
The medicine which we need", he said. (22)

"Son, seventy *vellam* souls,
Rama and his brother, the three worlds,
Dharma and the Vedas--- all shall live
By what you will be doing.
Don't waste single moment,
But follow my instructions, and run! (23)

"Stalwart, One, when you leave this sea behind,
Nine thousand yojanas away
You will find the Himalayas
Which is two thousand yojanas broad.
Nine thousand yojanas after that
Lies the mountain of gold. (24)

"Nine thousand yojanas from that
Is the red mountain Nidata;
The same distance beyond that
You will reach Meru bigger than all---
Its breadth, Stalwart, you will find
Is thirtytwo thousand yojanas. (25)

"If you cross Meru and go
Nine thousand yojanas,
You will find the Blue Mountain
Two thousand yojanas ahead;
After that, Hanuman, you will find
Four thousand yojanas away
A black mountain of medicines---
And when you see that mountain
You will see too the end of our sorrows! (26)

"A medicine that will revive the dead;
One that will join split bodies;
One that will push out weapons stuck;
And a true one to restore old forms---
O Hero, go there and bring these,"
Advised that wise one giving him
The signs by which to recognise them. (27)

"These four medicines arose
When the milky ocean was churned;
The gods knowing their value
Keep them in their guard;
When the Splendour beyond the Vedas
Measured the worlds, and I beat the drum,
I saw these and asked about them,
And the ancient sages told me their nature. (28)

"The guards guarding these are countless
And will not relent to any;
Many weapons sharp, well-oiled
Also stand in guarding them;
Truthful One, knowing your mission
They will come to your hands;
Neither will the gods harm you,
But will go and hide themselves". (29)

"If this is my task", said Hanuman,
"The dead will be born again;
That no harm may come to my Chief,
Please go and console him"---
Saying which the Vedas' self
Left them and expanded himself,
His head touching the skies,
His golden shoulders stretching out
So as to cover all the space
And as if he would swallow the sky! (30)

The stars and planets became as it were
A gem-set necklace made for him;
His shoulders stretched from end to end
More than a thousand countless yojanas.
There was no space left in Lanka
To plant his second step after his first:
His sweeping arms went beyond the quarters---
Such was his form as swift he arose! (31)

He, the one with victory shoulders,
Curled his tail, raised his hands,
Opened his mouth a little,
Dug his foot in, broadened his chest
And then narrowed his neck.
The hair on his skin bristling,
He rose up high speedily,
Lanka tossing like a ship
In the sea which surrounded it. (32)

Huge cloud-families were rent asunder,
Wide seas were torn;
East and west scattered stars,
Hills and trees erupted;
Aerial chariots fell down like thunder
And filled the seas;
Which as a result
Spread in all directions. (33)

As he sprang forward
Many mountains leaned to the north
Tempestuous breezes blowing them over.
The speed with which he shot forward
Made people say that his father
The god of wind must have got exhausted.
The seas dried, the clouds were blackened,
Huge forests were scorched and burnt. (34)

The seas fleeing in front, the wind rushing behind
His body seeming to go ahead of his mind,
The gods who saw Hanuman in flight
Said, "From the first, the seat of the Rakshasas
Has been sunk by him in a sea of sorrow,
And all our griefs are now at an end. (35)

He passed the world of the clouds
And then of the sun and the moon,
And beyond those where the planets
And the stars reside.
And after that the heaven
Sought by those doing penance,
And passing that, the place
Where the world of Brahma seemed near. (36)

Some of those residing in heaven
Said, "This looks like Garuda
Going to Vaikuntham";
Others said, "This must be
Brahma going to his Satyaloka";
And still others, "Who but Siva
The three-eyed can essay such a flight?" (37)

Those residing one above another
Said variously, "This must be Vishnu
Whose forms the Vedas cannot know
Indulging in a little sport
In a shape of his own choice";
"Look carefully", others said,
"In a second he has escaped.
This is one going to that land---
The one, the ultimate *moksha*---
From which he will never return". (38)

Those who claimed to know all
Did not however know anything
About this one who had leaped over the sea
And won every battle he fought.
"Form", said some; "Light", said others;
"A formless brightness", said a third;
"The embryo which standing outside
Has created this world", said a fourth. (39)

His shoulders rising up to the world
   Of the God of the Lotus,
And putting all the upper sky
   Into the shade,
The breeze which blew with his speedy rise
   Hit the face of heaven
And the heads of the guardians of the world shook
   And the globe quivered. (40)

The day that Hanuman arose
Was as beneficial
To the gods, sages and others
Devoted to the Vedas
As the day when that dwarf[2]
Starting with his small foot
Measured all the world
He got from the Asura king. (41)

2. Vamana

The denizens of the three worlds---
Gods, sages, Siddhas and their wives
Swarmed round him in their joy.
The gems, sandal paste, powder, flowers
They scattered on him struck to him
And made him look as he rose in the sky
As if he was a *karpaka* tree! (42)

He reached the Himalayas--- and the gods,
Patient sages and righteous men there
Blessed him saying, "Fare well in your task";
And after that he was glad to see
Kailasa the abode of Siva. (43)

Looking at the north-east where Siva reigned
He clasped his hands and made a bow;
And the Lord there full of love
Showed him to Parvati as the Wind god's son. (44)

"Why has he come?" asked the Mother of the World.
"It is Rama's messenger seeking medicine",
Said he. "The wickedness in Lanka
Is sure to end. Bright Brows, we will see
The dreadful fight tomorrow". (45)

Crossing a thousand yojanas
He reached the top of Hemakuta
Where the gods enjoy themselves
In a pleasure that is endless.
And then with the speed of Vishnu's discus
He reached the top of Nidata. (46)

Quicker than thought and the sight
Of countless men of wisdom
And even the minds of the gods
He reached Meru, the measuring rod
Of the earth, the quarters and the heaven
Of Brahma, the Lotus Lord himself. (47)

He went beyond that northern mountain
Whose nature the very gods did not know,
And saw in a great isle surrounded by the sea
The *jambu* tree which the three worlds worship. (48)

Dharma personified, he saw
On the top of that mountain
The Creator of the world
Shining on his golden seat,
And raised his hands in reverence to him. (49)

In a wood full of trees
Where each god stood with head bent
And the sages recited the Vedas
Wearing the *tulasi* chaplet
With the goddesses of the Earth and Fortune,
He saw also the Primal God
And bent his head down to him. (50)

To the north-east of that hill he saw
One with five dazzling lotus faces
And eight shoulders,[3] spreading a light
Brilliant as a thousand suns
Worshipped with flowers by the three worlds
With to his left, a damsel bejewelled
And to him also he bowed. (51)

Under an umbrella like the moon,
Lovely women waving fly-whisks
And producing a breeze like the sweet south.,
Heavenly denizens at his feet
And a drum beating, he beheld
Indra in state, bowed to him and passed. (52)

---

3. Siva

He saw at the top of Meru
Bright with the *karpaka* trees
Covered with wide-spread blossoms,
The eight guardians of the quarters
Taking care of the three worlds. (53)

Crossing that big mountain
The expert going ahead
Saw the Uttaraguru
In a dazzling light;
And seeing the darkness removed,
That clever one lamented,
"Alas, my task is aborted
And my ardour gone!" (54)

"Before that Primal God could know",
Said that incomparable one,
"I wanted to give the medicine
And remove all sorrow
In the middle of the night.
But the sun has risen now
And makes me dispirited.
What is left for me to do"?
Said he feeling distressed. (55)

The great *tapasvi* moving faster than wind
Then realised that the sun
Was still in the west and dawn not broken;
That he had forgotten what the puranas say
That to those living in the north of Meru
The sun will appear in the opposite direction,
And realising this was relieved. (56)

He also saw that land---
As it were the seat of Lakshmi----
Where those couples live
Who, though born as two,
Live eternally,
Their hearts and life but one
Enjoying the bliss
Their virtues earned for them. (57)

He saw a land like that of the Chola
Thyagavinodan with his fresh garland,
Presided over by the god
With flaming hair, by Brahma and by Vishnu
With his eternally young consort---
Saw it with joy, and passed on. (58)

Crossing the broad sky-piercing Meru,
The great one destined for Brahmahood,
Never to die or be born again,
Saw stretched before him
A blue mountain which was like Vishnu
The dark one, the day he measured the world. (59)

Crossing that mountain which threw
Night itself into the shade
The golden-hill-shouldered saw in front
The mountain described by Jambavan;
The good hill which with its brightness
Outdazzled the sun on high
And containing on its crests
The divine medicines as described. (60)

He leapt on it; and that hill
Listed down because of that leap.
The guardian deities were aggrieved
And rushing up asked him angrily,
"Who are you? What is your aim?"
And he explained the position to them. (61)

They heard him, and said, "Sir,
Take what you want, and afterwards
Show us that you have done no damage";
Blessed him, and disappeared.
Vishnu's discus also appeared
And withdrew at once. And Hanuman
With his diamond shoulders uprooted that hill. (62)

He thought that if he stood there
Looking for the herbs much time would be lost;
And therefore deciding to uproot the hill
Sprang in a flash into the sky. (63)

A mountain a thousand yojanas wide
And a thousand yojanas deep
He uprooted in an instant
And carried on one hand and leapt---
His fame as wide as all the worlds. (64)

That is what happened there.
And let me now narrate
What happened here when those two[4]
Hurried to Rama to massage his feet. (65)

The twin lotuses drawing all women
As if they were bees, the abodes of mercy,
The spotless givers of boons,
Blossoming, opened out like Dharma. (66)

He saw beside him the king of the bears
And the Rakshasa who had heightened his fame,
Their eyes moist, heads raised, hands clasped,
Distressed and melting with sorrow. (67)

---

4. Vibhishana and Jambavan.

"Have you, Vibhishana," he asked,
"Done what I asked you?[5] Are you all right?"
And looking at Jambavan the famous,
"You have escaped with your life then? (68)

"This ruin, Sirs, has befallen us;
There is nothing which we can do;
Those who are dead will not come back;
If there is anything to be done
Tell me, you who are truthful and wise. (69)

"What can I say who, like a fool,
Let my heart droop for that Sita?
I have shown the world now
What a tale mine is
Of blameful triviality. (70)

"I did not heed my brother's warning,
'This stag here is a piece of witchcraft';
Went after it; couldn't refuse a woman---
And friends, the result is these infamous deaths! (71)

"I saw Ravana face to face
And waged a fearful fight with him;
But because of my sinful past
I could not kill him, but lost instead
All my dear relations. (72)

"When my brother told me,
'You shall see that sinner killed
By the Brahmastra I will use',
I wouldn't agree --- doubtless impelled
By the grim fate which was bent on my ruin. (73)

5. Arrange food for the fighters (vide st.88 of Chapter 21).

"I didn't stand beside him but went away
To offer worship to the weapons;
Our friends were killed; my brother died
Without defeating that Rakshasa,
Fate having overruled. (74)

"There is no point in talking like this
Cheaply here; it is best
To see our dear and gallant friends
Who gave up their lives in the fight
In heaven. We can't see them here. (75)

"After losing my brother and friends,
What good is it that I should
Defeat the obnoxious Rakshasas,
Uproot them, shoot down Ravana---
All for the benefit of the gods? (76)

"When my brother is dead, who else
Is anything to me? What is fame without end?
What virtue? manliness? kith and kin?
Kingdom? friendship? the future?
Vedic practices? or truth? (77)

"After I have lost my brother
If, heart hardened, I vanquish the Rakshasas
And establish my manliness,
What will that prove except that I am
A merciless fellow with the eyes of a doll
And a cheat as well? Must I not
Undergo rather a speedy death? (78)

"All men of honour will say about me,
'He lost his father, and Jatayu;
His dear friends, and the spotless brother
Who guarded him through thick and thin,
And the worthless fellow sticks only to Sita'. (79)

"How wonderful if I am to say,
'I have destroyed the Rakshasas root and branch
And have returned to Ayodhya.
I am here, but not my good brother.
And let me now rule the land". (80)

"This being so, I won't hesitate
But will end at once", he concluded---
Whereupon Jambavan fell at his feet
And said, "Lord, I have a thing to say. (81)

"You who are beyond all knowledge
Do not seem to know yourself.
But I have known you a long while,
Though to reveal it will be sinful
As it will counter the plan of the gods.
You will know about this later on. (82)

"Great chief, I guessed that the missile
Which pierced even your brother's body
In this fell battlefield
Must be the Brahmastra.
This guess of mine cannot be wrong. (83)

"That missile, transcendent Lord,
Will drink up the lives of gods and Titans.
It can't hurt you and left you alone.
What need is there of further proof?[6] (84)

"The great Hanuman, regaining his senses,
And immensely eager to end this grief
Has agreed to my request
To bring the sovereign remedy for this
In an instant, and has rushed to the north. (85)

---

6. Adopting the Kazhakam reading.

"He will cross the Himalayas,
Go beyond Meru the monarch of mountains
And will be back in a short while.
Ancient of Days! Put off your sorrow. (86)

"Beautiful like Manmatha!
Except me, my father Brahma,
Siva, and Vishnu with his discus,
None knows the nature of these drugs. (87)

"They came with ambrosia when the sea was churned;
They are guarded by the dark-skinned Vishnu;
They are beyond Meru in Uttaraguru;
None can approach them where they are hidden. (88)

"No one has touched them since they appeared;
Learn, Great One, of their greatness.
Even if Brahma who made the three worlds
Should die, these drugs will revive him. (89)

One of these, Ancient, will remove the missile;
Another will mend the broken bone;
A third will bring back departed life;
And the fourth restore the original form. (90)

"They are sure to come. Do not grieve.
Hanuman guided by Dharma's self
Will come quickly. This is nothing to him",
He said, and bowed to his feet.
And Rama, the god to wipe out the past
And relieve everyone was pleased. (91)

Even as he said, "I do not doubt
What you said regarding the drug
And he will bring it from that land of pleasure",
There rose a noise from the sky above. (92)

The sea surged and hit the shore;
The hills bearing the clouds cracked;
A typhoon uncontrolled arose
And blew from the northern quarter. (93)

The stars lost their seats and scattered;
The solar sphere embraced the moon;
The deer were frightened by the stag on the latter
And clouds swarmed and mingled as if they were
bees! (94)

Roots and flowers shooting up to the sky
Covered it, as hills and trees
Falling into the sea covered it again;[7]
And Hanuman shouted his arrival
To remove the grief of those who were waiting. (95)

Clouds, seas and other things
In the sky and on the earth
Growled in concert with Hanuman
Who roared like a tiger, to show their sympathy. (96)

As when the great sea was churned,
Garuda obedient brought Mandara[8] Mount
Making one wonder where it had gone,
So Hanuman now made his appearance. (97)

He was also like his father the Wind god
When competing with Adisesha
He broke away peaks from Mount Meru
And threw them to form Lanka[9]
Though such comparisons are really vain. (98)

---

7. As formerly, when Nala bridged it.

8. Vide chapter 15, verse 343.

9. Vide chapter 5, verse 17.

Before one could say, "Here he is"
He was standing on Lanka;
But the divine mountain stayed in the air
Loth to alight on that land of the sinners! (99)

The Wind god came then and blew that drug
On those below and made them rise
Along with the son of the Sun on high
And all of them raised a joyous shout! 99(a)

When the breeze blew from that mountain
Those who were the guests of the gods
Regained their strength and beauty
And conquering Death resumed their forms. (100)

The Rakshasas bodies thrown in the sea
Perished; all that remained above
Including even the ships revived---
What to speak of the monkeys? (101)

The shafts fell off, the wounds healed;
The flame cooling,. the red eyes in the body
Began to move again; all the world
Resumed its worship. Lakshmana
Lovely-tufted regained his consciousness. (102)

The noise from those who arose
Drowning that of the seven seas
As well as the blessings of the gods
Reaching his ears roused Rama
Before whom Lakshmana stood
Removing his sorrow. (103)

Shoulders swelling joyously,
Rama embraced the brother who arose.
His distress was over. and the evils in the world.
The gods lost their anxiety. (104)

Nymphs danced; the stringed instruments
Like the *Kinnana* produced the seven notes
Sweet as ambrosia; all the world
Took an oil-bath; the sages recited the Vedas. (105)

Those, the Vedas, stood up and cheered!
The learned Vedic Brahmins cheered!
Fame cheered, the seas cheered!
The gods' hearts, cooled like the seas, cheered! (106)

Destruction removed, the Brahmastra
Bowed to the handsome bowman,
Went round him declaring,
"You have stabilized Truth as becomes you",
Took leave of him and departed. (107)

The gods cheering, the unique Lord
Embraced Hanuman whose love for him
Exceeded that of a mother, and said,
His eyes bedimmed with tears of love,
"You have banished the very name of sorrow". (108)

With a chest which Sita's breasts
Had claimed as their own, he embraced him,
His heart melting, and said to him
Who had knelt down to worship him, (109)

"We took our birth first from one
Who never departing from the family code
Died because of the sorrow I caused;
We died now--- and because of you
Never departing from what is right
Have had through you a second birth! (110)

"If one were to express in words
The thanks due for a life saved,
Can the life so saved be long enough?[10]
You have saved not only our lives,
But our fame, our safety, our lineage,
And saved also Dharma itself. (111)

"What has happened for a brief while
Has also its use--- as it has shown
The strength of brotherly love.
You will live through the Dissolution.
And as for the help rendered by you,
But for you all the seven worlds
Would have been exterminated. (112)

"You have made it possible
For all who have been with me
Not to have died by today's deed.
May you never have any illness!
Live long and happily by my command". (113)

The others too, who through Hanuman's deed
Had got their lives and loved him for it
Swarmed round him and blessed him,
And he detailed to them all that had happened. (114)

"O you of infinite energy!
Lest this mountain should prevent
The death of our wicked foes,
Replace it with its medicinal plants
Where you took it from, and return", (115)

Said Jambavan, and that king of monkeys,
Saying, "That is right", and deciding
To be back within minutes, took in his hands
That divine hill and departed. (116)

---

10. My interpretation.

24. THE DRUNKEN DAMES

Things thus here, Ravana arose
And beside himself with joy,
Kinnaras singing classical music,
Ordered young women with eyes like the carp
And mien like that of the peacocks
To treat themselves to toddy
And put on a dance before him. (1)

Heavenly nymphs, Vidyadhara women,
Rakshasis, the wives of Asuras,
Naga girls with ripening breasts,
Yakshinis sweet as sugarcane,
Siddha maidens came in heaps
Frightening flocks of peacocks away! (2)

Menaka, the sword-eyed Tilottama,
Rambha, Urvasi the honey-sweet prattler
And all the other heavenly nymphs
Came to take part--- anklets tinkling
And various drums beating time as they danced. (3)

Their faces, which were moons, grew red
With annoyance[1] that with the help
Of their enemise, the lotuses,
They should be put into the shade
By the gold jewels in their ear and hair---
Screwed in, hanging, worn outside---
And those pearls, their teeth, behind red lips! (4)

---

1. The redness due to the drink is explained as caused by anger provoked by a lotus forest taking possession of them, equipped with gold and pearls.

Their smiles--- moonbeams--- ornaments--- the sun---
And their dazzling complexion
Which lighted the lights, all together
Pushed away the darkness
Both outside and in the beholders. (5)

The toddy spread its influence
Like the teaching which seduces a fool
Who, though morally instructed
By those learned in the past,
Cannot foresee what is to come
And succumbs to a designing rogue. (6)

Smiles came quickly and often;
The body perspired; soft lips trembled;
The jasmine teeth flashed a moonbeam;
Eyes expert in killing grew red;
Brows like bows contracted and bent low
And red mouths were bleached white. (7)

Their hair, a dark rack, unrolled
Fell past their middles down to their heels;
And their new clothes, with their tinkling waistlets,
Reached their mango-sprig ankles---
But the sweet prattlers were unaware
That all this had happened! (8)

When waistlet and sari slid down their thighs
The hair on their heads rushed to rescue their shame;
Low ones in a court can only act low
While honour comes easy to the high ever high![2] (9)

Those women no longer used their eyes as arrows,
As if Manmatha should sheathe his shafts;
And sang their songs and played their strings
Without any care for pitch or measure! (10)

2. Vide Kural: 980.

Drinks gaining on them, their thin voices
Could not keep pace with the pipes;
It was as if sour toddy was mixed
With sweet ambrosia when they sang their falsetto! (11)

These experts in abhinaya[3]
Now acted as if they were magicians,
Mimicked men when representing women,
Talked of elephants and portrayed toads! (12)

They would weep, laugh, sing and dance;
Bow to those near them, fall asleep;
Leap up and droop away; dribble;
Tired, fall on one another;
Close their bloodshot sword eyes
Elaborately yawn and stretch! (13)

They would say, "You must not doubt me,
Know me exactly for what I am"
And jabber away keeping nothing back.
Hearing them, even the sages
Wholly devoted to God
Would act as if they were assailed
By Manmatha's arrows at every pore! (14)

Their sword eyes darting here and there
And changing from blue to red,
While their lips which were red as blood
Turned into a colourless white
Seemed to betoken to the Rakshasas
The change which was awaiting them. (15)

---

3. The aspect of Bharatanatyam portraying feelings through facial expression and gestures.

Those maidens with their long eyes
With which the carp, the lance of Death
And Rama's arrow couldn't compare,
Put on the rack of hair on their head
The jewels meant for their breasts
And the clothes which they were to wear! (16)

As the King was enjoying their smiles
Whose resemblance to pearls none could gainsay,
The terrific noise which the monkeys made
Entering through each ear of his
Filled him with perturbation. (17)

When that noise from outside came,
The dances, drunken joys, sweet music,
The divine drum-beats, love-languishings
Of coral lips and sidelong glances,
Their sweet prattle--- all of these
Took on the look of faded flowers. (18)

When the twangs arose from those divine bows,
The tethered elephants drooped in their beds;
The maned horses shook with fear;
And the frightened Rakshasas recalled
The day that the sea was churned. (19)

Those faces with their teeth like pearls,
And their eyes flashing like swords
Looked to Ravana at that time
The same as a heap of monkey faces.
His heart was as a sea churned---
And his ten faces, so many moons,
Lost their lustre as if the night
Had suddenly turned into day! (20)

The spies coming took the shape of bees,
And ascending Ravana's garlands
Whispered in his ears all that had happened.
Startled by the news that the enemy was safe,
He left that heavenly *pandal*
And repaired to his council chamber. (21)

25 . THE PHANTOM SITA

His son, Pot Belly, the army chiefs,
Old men, those to be consulted
Came and spread themselves around him,
And he told them of all the trouble he had borne. (1)

"If our army", said Maliyavan,
"Had not peremptorily been chucked in the sea,
Wouldn't they be available now for the fight?
The Brahmastra having proved futile,
There is nothing to prevent our destruction. (2)

"It was doubtless the stalwart Hanuman
Who in an instant leaving Lanka
Leapt across the mountain Meru
And came back with that other mountain
Containing the powerful drugs---
All through the grace of almighty God. (3)

"If this Lanka which is an island
Is pulled up from the sea and flung on the land,
Which of us will then survive?
If Hanuman who is now away
Uproots Meru and throws it on us,
Who is there to prevent him?
What use then to prolong this war? (4)

"If he wants to alter the norms
He will do it through main force,
Why is it said that the prime gods are three?
This can be but a thoughtless notion.
With Hanuman their number is four. (5)

"The dead are dead; we are alive
As if we have had a second birth;
We have forgotten the way to live.
But even now we can restore Sita
And take refuge with those pious men. (6)

"O shoulders which lifted Kailasa with Siva!
Can we the Rakshasas, our life a raindrop,
Hope to succeed in a war with one
Who killed Vali with a single shaft,
Conquered the sea and killed Kumbhakarna? (7)

"All those Rakshasas are dead
Who could have drunk up the sea
And weaponed to dig up heaven and earth.
Who is there in Lanka now
Except you and your son?
We cannot succeed", said he,
Who could foresee the future, (8)

When Maliyavan said all this
Ravana laughed revealing his teeth,
A crescent, a flash in a cloud,
And grinding them like thunder,
Hissed, "O, well said indeed!"
Not knowing what would be good for him . (8a)

His head and eye darting fire,
He said, "Let all the Rakshasas die,
And all the weapons disappear!
Did I catch that parrot Sita
Only to let her escape
And put an end to my love
So that my life may be saved? (9)

"Let be my son and others!
All you cowards fond of your life,
Go and save yourselves! Tomorrow
Like the fire of Dissolution
I will destroy those men and that monkey",
Said that tyrant, to whom his son said; (10)

"There is a thing I should like to say
If you will consider and accept it.
The Brahmastram I sent with an measureless heat
Was sent against Rama too.
That is why it proved vain
Refusing to touch him. (11)

"He is not a man, nor an ancient god,
Nor a sage. He is what Vibhishana
Told us truly; the Supreme worshipped
By those who have given up "I" and "mine".
That, O King, became clear that day. (12)

"Let those things be! To talk of them
Is not manly. Let what is fallen
So remain. Don't grieve, my Hero!
I will quickly go to Nikumbhila
And when I finish my yaga there,
All your sorrows will come to an end!" (13)

"That is good. Go ahead", said the Rakshasa.
"But your brother", said his son
"Will tell them, and they will then try
To see that the yaga is not finished".
"How can we prevent that?" asked Ravana. (14)

"I will make a likeness of Sita
And kill it before Hanuman who has seen her
And say that with a big army
I am going to attack Ayodhya
Whereupon helpless, they will be plunged in sorrow. (15)

"'Sita now dead', they will say,
'It is no use staying here.
There are our brothers, mothers and kinsmen,
And the good city which will be destroyed';
And fearing that, they will all go there
In great sorrow with their army. (16)

"Even if they don't go themselves
Until they send Hanuman
And find out what is happening there
They will not assuage their sorrow.
Meanwhile I will conclude my yaga,
Come back here speedily
And with a fell force slaying all
Give you victory", he said. (17)

The Rakshasa saying that would be good,
His wiz kid" went to make the image;
While Sugriva told Rama,
"Let us burn this ancient city
So as to weaken its defence". (18)

When Rama said that that would be good,
He leapt and reached the towers of Lanka;
And the seventy *vellam* monkey army
Each took a torch for all to see. (19)

Countless crores of that army
Leapt over the strong well-guarded ramparts
To the shame and amazement of that old city
Like white clouds lit up with lightning. (20)

The torches flung in every direction
By that *vellam* of spotless monkeys
Fell like stars dropping from heaven
Betokening the ruin of the city.[1] (21)

---

1. Shooting stars are an ill omen.

The torches flung by those huge monkeys
On the city where dwelt that wicked King
Were incessant, like the fiery arrows
Shot by Rama on the sea. (22)

The leaping flames which attacked Lanka
To the terror of its guards
Made the city look like the sea
When Rama's arrows assailed it. (23)

The groves in that pebbly city
Catching fire, the birds arose
Screaming, their noise reaching heaven;
And so did the citizens of Lanka! (24)

Rama whose great bowmanship
Was the envy of the three worlds
And of the Trinity
Sent some arrows like flambeaux
Which made the tower on a hill collapse. (25)

When these things were happening here,
The great Hanuman who had taken the hill
Beyond Meru, replaced it
And returned with the speed of the wind. (26)

The noise made by that ankleted hero
Was heard in Lanka;
And that city responded to it
Like serpents hissing when they hear Garuda. (27)

At the western gate where the son of the Wind,
Fiery-eyed, had arrived
The one whose witchcraft none could undo---
The conqueror of Death joined him. (28)

Catching a fawn-like Sita
By her hair with one hand
And with a sharp sword in the other,
He who had made that image said: (29)

"You have come to fight for this one's sake;
My father is indifferent,
And I am going to kill her", he said,
Showing wrath and disgust; and Hanuman was stunned. (30)

'This is indeed the one I saw",
He felt. "Our life is now finished".
He grew hot, didn't know a way out;
His mouth dried up as if he was dead. (31)

He felt that he could do nothing
And thought it was best to teach him propriety.
"You are a good man from a good family", he said,
"Isn't it improper to kill a woman? (32)

"You are fourth in descent from Brahma himself;
Know all the best parts of books;
Isn't mercilessly to kill a woman
The worst possible of all sins? (33)

"The earth is aghast, heaven trembles
And shuts its eyes. You can see this.
My thoughts too shrink. You have given up mercy!
Isn't killing a woman an infamous sin? (34)

"If you will give her to me and go
All the world will become yours.
Don't you know your ancestry?
Meanness is not a foundation for fame", (35)

Said Hanuman; and Indrajit,
"Hear this: can anything be better
To save my father and Lanka from ruin
Than this most praise-worthy deed?
Tell me", he said, laughed and continued: (35 a)

"I will kill her with my sword",
Said he angrily, "So that my father
And all in Lanka may live,
And the gods may run away. (36)

"Get out, fellow! You have failed,
If you wish, go save Ayodhya.
I will set it on fire today,
And after that will come back here. (37)

"Even the gods cannot now save
Your brothers and your mothers.
The fiery arrows from my hands
Will be reducing them to ashes. (38)

"This very moment I will go
In the aerial chariot in which I stand.
When my numberless arrows fly
Will they be able to escape?" (39)

"Save me, my Liege, save me", cried
That poor woman but he wouldn't relent;
He cut her down, and with that sea his army---
Rose up into the air. (40)

From the south he went in his chariot
In the northern direction;
Hanuman aware of nothing
Crashed to the ground like a hill. (41)

He who went changed his direction
And reached Nikumbhila;
The good one, anguished and wilting,
His heart contracted, gave utterance: (42)

His great energy undermined,
"O Swan, the jewel of womankind!
My mother! Is there no God then?
Even when I saw you sliced
My evil heart and life didn't break?" (43)

He rose and wished to spring on him;
Fallen into a great grief,
He sighed, breathed hard and sobbed;
Grew thin and exhaled flaming breaths;
Trembled, ploughed the earth with his head
And broke out further into these; (44)

"Our hopes are blasted. I had thought
That the three worlds' darkness would now lift;
But that which looked like the twilight of dawn
Has proved the twilight of evening
And merged the world in a greater darkness!
Trickery, alas! has prevailed!
The wretch with his sword has slain a goddess.
Dharma, O dear! has ceased to be! (45)

"I saw killed in front of me
A prisoner whose shield was chastity,
And was unable to help her
Like a bird deprived of both its wings.
I am sunk in a self-made prison.
What a wonderful way of achieving
Freedom for my great Lord's lady! (46)

"A sinful Rakshasa seizes a woman,
A model wife to a divinity,
An ascetic, helpless, high-born and spotless,
Sita who is Lakshmi, and imprisons her;
And when his son slaughters her
I look on--- no doubt much moved,
But what use is such compassion? (47)

"I came as Rama's messenger---
Of one whose fame no learning can reach---
Only, it would seem, as a postboy,
Neither to vanquish your oppressors
Nor to rescue you from them;
It seems my coming has caused your death.
I have gathered for myself a dreadful blame! (48)

"Wandering helpless, looking for his wife
And forgetting himself not finding her
He was consoled with my message,
'She is alive! I have seen her!'
And now I am to tell him,
'I saw her killed by the Rakshasa'?
Was it for telling this that I came?
Is this the fruition of my birth? (49)

"I crossed the sea; burnt this city;
Leaped across Meru and brought an elixir;
And exulted thinking how unique I was.
But all I have done as Rama's slave
Is as a scent dissolved in a sea. (50)

"I did not give up my wretched life
Making a stand and spilling it
Against the one who killed you,
But stood and watched him doing it.
I have my hands still with me
To gather fruits, eat them and live!
Am I not indeed unique?" (51)

So he said and stood pitying.
"That thief proclaimed he would assail Ayodhya.
I heard him, I can see the track;
If I were to go after him
Rama will not know what has happened.
I do not know what I should do",
Said he confused, then came to a decision. (52)

"I will tell him, the King of the world,
All that has happened, and if he dies
I will die with him; otherwise,
Whatever he orders I will obey.
I see no alternative".
And the golden-shouldered reached the golden feet. (53)

He reached the feet of that leonine hero,
Distressed in limbs, mind, eyes and soul;
And covered with sighs and streaming tears
Fell down before him like a mountain felled! (54)

Rama stooped, raised him with his hands
Asked him, "What happened?" and he said tottering,
"The Rakshasa has killed with his sword today
The lady steeped in sorrow",
And rolled on the ground and sobbed. (55)

Rama didn't tremble; did not sigh;
Did not wink; shed no tears;
Did not speak; did not sob;
Didn't fall on the ground or perspire;
Even the gods could not have known
Exactly how he was affected. (56)

The monkey chiefs when they heard the news,
Startled and dispirited
Fell at the feet of Rama
Generous like the *karpaka* ---
Like a row of trees brought down
By a furious northern wind,
And looked like so many mountains
Lying uprooted on the ground. (57)

The hero lost his consciousness
And turned into a mere picture;
Would not look at his friends' faces
Nor answer his brother's questions;
His great love which like an arrow
Pierced his heart left an impression
Which even the mad could not have borne,
And he drooped down like one dead. (58)

Seeing what happened to the Chief
And the shame that had come to them,
The way their task was frustrated
Which seemed to be taking a good turn,
Lakshmana too fell down,---
His mouth, mind, eye and body
All of them drooping and senseless,---
Like a calf which had lost its mother. (59)

Vibhishana too, quite canny,
Caught in this endless sorrow
To which he could find no clue,
Began to entertain a doubt
Whether this indeed could have been done
By Indrajit who might have thought,
"We cannot vanquish those, but since
She has caused all this trouble
She deserves to be killed". (60)

He sprinkled cold water on Rama's face
And handled his body with care
Doing all the things needed
Like massaging his feet, hands and trunk,
Whereupon the great Lord
Beyond the knowledge of the Vedas
Opened his eyes slowly
And looked at all those around him. (61)

Seeing how Rama's eyes
Were streaming with tears,
Heart broken at what had happened
With none to console him,
Lakshmana nevertheless felt
That he would not give up the struggle
As he would never forget the shame
And proceeded to console him. (62)

"When destruction comes along
  To plunge us in sorrow
It is for the weaklings
  To submit to it.
That will not befit you.
If our race has been besmirched,
Quell Dharma and the world alike,
Not droop like thoughtless fools. (63)

"When a sinful tyrant seizes and kills
A woman helpless, an ascetic,
The goddess of chastity, your wife, Lakshmi.
Do you endure the sorrow caused
That you may just live and let live,
For mercy's sake, or for Dharma's? (64)

"If those arrogant of their might,
Whether they are Rakshasas or gods,
Brahmins, gurus, sages or the Vedas
Torment those who are wedded to virtue,
Why should'nt the three worlds go up in flames? (65)

"Shall the seven worlds remain standing?
The gods stay? Dharma be worshipped?
The clouds pour rain? and we continue
Just moaning and moping? How wonderful
The bows we carry in our hands! (66)

"If we who can enter this city,
Can in an instant reduce it to ashes,
Burn the direction the Rakshasa took
As well as the world of the gods,
Keep instead just shedding tears,
Resting our heads on our hands
Or allowing them to droop
Simply indulging our sorrow,
Will that not look dastardly? (67)

"There for the sake of Dharma,
We lost a kingdom, took to the forest,
Had Sita seized by a villain
And lived a life of rectitude.
And here too if we suffer our troubles,
Won't they who see our meekness
Put fetters on us and make us their slaves? (68)

"If we do nothing and just die,
People will say,' In their sight,
That lovely woman was beheaded,
And they just did not have the guts
To do anything but die of shame'.
Such passiveness won't make sense.
Why do you droop like foolish folk?" (69)

After Lakshmana said all this,
Sugriva lying spiritless
Jumped up suddenly, as if from a dream,
And said, "What is there to think?
Come, let us go and jump on the chest
Of the Rakshasa in his house
Who like a beetle courting fire
Was bothering Sita! (70)

"Let us dig up Lanka,
Kill the cruel Rakshasas,
Their gold-decked wives and sucking children,
And destroy their entire clan.
And if the gods should intervene
Because of our dreadful deeds
We will pull down their heaven to the earth. (71)

"If we have to defy Dharma
Why stay put and merely mope?
We will fight the three worlds,
Whirl like a kite, and pull up like weeds
The families of the gods", he said
And got ready to leap into Lanka. (72)

All the other heroes then,
Leaping ahead of Sugriva,
Said, "We will pull up the Rakshasas
With their houses and throw them out"
And proceeded to do so.
Thereupon Hanuman said,
"One more thing", and told them
Of the treacherous plot against Ayodhya. (73)

When Rama heard that Indrajit
Had gone to the city where his mothers and brothers
Were doing penance awaiting him,
His distress for Sita was overcome
By a greater pain, as when a wound
Is treated with a burning brand.[2] (74)

Getting out of his sea of sorrow
Like Vishnu from his sleep on the ocean,
His heart full of blazing rage,
Limbs trembling with indignation.
He who normally moved as fast
As a rolling bean on the ground
Stood awhile taken aback. (75)

"The wages for my past sins
Do not seem to end with Sita.
They seem determined to kill all.
I do not know who else will go.
Is there no way to stop this?
Will my brothers stay alive? (76)

"He flies in a chariot swifter than thought
And will be back in a few minutes;
My house there will be ruined.
And here I have lost my wife.
What next will come I do not know,
Nor is there any prospect of death! (77)

"My sins have not exhausted themselves
In the form of death to my father,
My other father Jatayu
And the hapless Sita.
In the form of a poor girl
They have brought death also
To her mothers, innocent brothers,
The city and the country too! (78)

2. A medical treatment in some cases.

"They will not know anything;
Even if they did, came and fought,
He will fling that conquering noose,
Win against and kill them.
No Garuda there to save them!
No Hanuman to hand down a drug!
Who will be able to give them life? (79)

"If you know of a way I can fly in the sky,
Diamond Shoulders, acquaint me.
Let every other matter perish
Including the battle here.
After crows have plucked out and eaten
That villain's eyes, I will come back
And fulfill my intentions." (80)

Lakshmana said thereupon,
"To overcome Bharata in a battle
Not only Indrajit but the three worlds
Will not be equal, will only burn up.
Do not stay in this sea of sorrow,
But kindly hear what I say. (81)

"If that wicked cheat should fling
The Brahmastra, will Bharata
Collapse like me? One blow with his fist
Will level his foe with his kin to the ground
As if he had invited death.
You can go and see this with your own eyes",
Said he writhing in anguish. (82)

Then said Hanuman standing by,
"Sir, you two can get on my shoulders
Or my palms. I will take you
Swifter than the wind to that old city.
If needed I can go everywhere
And destroy the enemy by myself. (83)

"Worthy Sir, if you put on my shoulders
Lanka dug up, and the monkeys
Numbering seventy vellam
And order me to proceed,
I will do so. Why delay?
I will get there before the aerial car
With all that crowd in an instant,
And leap down like very Death! (83 a)

"I tried to dissuade the murderer
With moral maxims, to bring him over,
And stood waiting. But when he killed her,
Grief overcame me and I fell down
Unconscious, and he hurried away.
Else will that villain have escaped? (84)

"The same way that chariot went
Swifter than thought I too will go,
Reach Ayodhya and await it.
Why delay? Get on my shoulders,
Let us beat that chariot!" (85)

When those two heroes as he asked
Got upon his shoulders,
Vibhishana bowing to them said,
"I have a thing to say.
Grief seized me, my mind was confused.
I didn't know what to do, and stood still.
Now I have recovered and suspect, Sir,
That this is all a piece of magic. (86)

"If that sinner had killed that saint
Wouldn't the three worlds have turned to ashes?
Even if he did kill her,
His going to Ayodhya is a fable.
You will know it all in a moment. (87)

"In an instant I will reach where she is.
Have a look, find out what has happened,
And tell you. After that", said Vibhishana,
Do what is needed". And, "Yes", said Rama,
And Vibhishana rose into the sky. (88)

He took on the form of a bee
And flew like Rama's thought;
Reached at once the grove
And saw with his own eyes
Sita, painted like a picture
And standing, making one wonder
Whether she was lifeless or alive! (89)

"My sorrows will end", she had thought,
"Only with my life".
But Trijata's sweet words
Had made her alter her mind;
And when she heard the noise
As of the clouds at Dissolution,[3]
Sweet as ambrosia to her ears
She had decided not to die. (90)

When Vibhishana saw the Rakshasa army
Rising group by group
To join Indrajit
Gone to Nikumbhila to perform his yaga,
He realised the hoax enacted,
And his joy rising sky-high
He was rid of the fear and confusion
That had filled his heart. (91)

3. Made by the monkeys when Hanuman arrived with the medicine mountain.

He saw the dismay of the gods
At seeing the plough, wood and ghee
Gathered for the yaga intended
Which would plunge them all low.
"Is this then the plot?" he asked,
And inferred what was ahead;
And reaching Rama fell down
At his lotus feet with the news. (92)

"The goddess is alive. I have seen her
With my own eyes to my heart's content.
Can there ever be an end to her
Who is chaste as Arundhati?
The Rakshasa played a trick on us
To make us miserable.
He has gone to Nikumbhila to perform a yaga
To destroy us root and branch". (93)

When they heard this, all the monkeys
Leapt and danced and made such a noise
That even the gods began to wonder
Whether the seven worlds, the seven isles,
The seven seas running into each other
Had all arisen and made that din---
And some said, "Yes", and some said, "No". (94)

26. THE NIKUMBHILA YAGA

The hero's doubts were at an end.
He clasped Vibhishana vigorously
And said, "Our grief will surely end.
You are here; so is God; and Hanuman;
Our past penances and Dharma" (1)

Hearing that, Vibhishana said,
"If that yaga is completed
We will not win, the Rakshasas will.
Give leave for me to go with Lakshmana,
Kill him and stop the yaga."
"Very good. You may do so", said Rama. (2)

He embraced his brother and said,
"If he should fix the Brahmastra
You must only prevent it,
Not use that missile yourself,[1]
Because when that weapon is used
Heaven and earth will alll be destroyed.
You must avoid that", he said. (3)

"He will discharge Siva's missile,
And also that of Vishnu
Standing before you. If he does,
Please counter each with itself.
As for his life, destroy it
Only with your own bowmanship. (4)

---

1. This advice is not in Valmiki.

"Death to the gods, he will employ
A great deal of witchcraft,
Study it, and you yourself
Acting according to Dharma
Get him when he has tired himself
And so prove yourself his death. (5)

"Adept in the science of archery,
Kill him when he excited
Discharges numerous arrows
And tries to prevent your own;
Then is the time, when he is weakened
To send your shots at his vital spots. (6)

"Clever One, before he fixes his arrow,
Fix yours, anticipating his moves;
The shafts he will send with measureless speed
Faster than wind, you must foresee
And deflect as they issue." (7)

Giving all these instructions,
He added, "Here is the great bow
Of one who is himself all the three worlds
But is not aware of his own greatness.
Take it from me and succeed, (8)

"Have you not yourself heard
The nature of this bow that day
From the Tamil sage Agastya?
This is the bow of the thousand-headed[2]
Given to Brahma after a yaga":
And he gave it to him with an armour. (9)

---

2. Vishnu

The axle-pin of the world gave him
The quiver also at his back;
Told him many truths and clasped
Him who stood like a mountain;
And the gods in heaven said thereon,
"Ended is our weakness now!" (10)

The gods proclaiming good luck,
The heavenly nymphs giving their blessings,
Wishing and invoking good things,
He went on his errand of war
Shining like Siva when he attacked Tripura. (11)

"Go, hero", said Rama, giving him leave,
"With Hanuman and other monkey chiefs";
And he whose only treasure was Dharma
Put his head on Rama's feet,
Not only touching them thus from without
But also carrying them within. (12)

Going round the lovely Cloud -hued
Who was shedding tears and feeling sas,
He carried that bow in his hand
And went quickly, saying in wrath,
"I will bring here that fellow's head". (13)

When that never-parted brother
Left him with such hot haste
He felt as if his life had gone
Leaving only his body behind
Just as Dasaratha felt
In the days of his boyhood
When he left him to go and guard
The great yaga which was afoot. (14)

From the Commander-in-Chief down,
All the monkeys, torches in hand,
Left for Nikumbhila
Over pathways and mountains covered with forests. (15)

There they saw a banian tree
Mid the dark sea of the Rakshasa army
Like Vishnu on the banian leaf
At the time of Dissolution. (16)

That army arranged in the form of a wheel
To guard the yaga performed by that sinner,
Was like the sea spread around
The flaming Badavagni. (17)

The elephants, chariots, horses and men
Resembling clouds and in thousands of crores
Spread over a thousand yojanas
As if seas were mingling with seas! (18)

How many were the gold chariots,
Horses, and elephants in the van?
We could not count the infantry.
This ordered host could go round the world
A thousand times, it seemed to them. (19)

The red hair reaching the sky
Falling on their dark bodies
Resembled Rama's fiery arrows
Shot at the sea and setting it aflame. (20)

Untwanging, still were their bows
    Like the rainbow in the sky;
Unsounded, still were their conches
    Like conches in the sea;
Unbeaten, still were their drums
    Like the dark and silent clouds! (21)

Seeing that great army still
As the sea once at Rama's command,
The monkeys never dispirited
Raised a shout to tear the sky. (22)

They shouted, and the Rakshasas
Counter-shouted; the drums were beaten.
The monkeys flung stones, their weapons
Against the Rakshasas' arrows like rain from
the clouds! (23)

The shining weapons hurled by them
On the fierce army of the monkeys
Rested on them like so many swans
On the walls of a tank. (24)

The stones, trees and hands which the monkeys
Used against the Rakshasas
Scattered their bows, axes, clubs
And their teeth, heads and bodies as well. (25)

The sticks, axes, clubs, ploughshares,
Spears, shafts and discuses thrown
Deprived the monkeys of their tails,
Heads, bodies, stomachs, legs and hands. (26)

Vibhishana asked Lakshmana then,
"Why waste time *here* in this way?
Unless you destroy the yaga there
How are we going to beat the enemy?" (27)

The gods, the four-faced Brahma,
Siva the first as well as Vishnu
Lord of the three worlds---there was none in heaven
Who had not gathered to watch the fight. (28)

The armies stood in many ranks;
Of chariots ready to fight;
Of the cavalry in rows;
Of the white-fanged infantry;
And the elephantry with trumpets.[3] (29)

Lakshmana entered the enemy host
And shot off a rain of sharp arrows,
And the Rakshasas leaving their city behind
Went to Death's abode in the south![4] (30)

Destroying by lakhs and crores
Musty elephants, chariots and horses,
Lakshmana with heaps of corpses
Made numerous islands
In the miry sea of blood. (31)

In the pits dug by the elephants' legs
The Rakshasa heads with their red hair
And the chaplets which they wore
Resembled the flames in a sacrifice! (32)

The shafts from his bow opened up
The bodies of the fierce elephants
Which looked like mountains on the ground
While their stomachs looked like pools. (33)

The crowned heads lying in the dust
Pierced by arrows as by bears' fangs
Glittered as if they were glowworms
Swarming round a snake's hole. (34)

---

3. Lit. musical instruments..

4. Yama, the god of death, is located in the south.

The rain of arrows caused a river of blood
Which swept away the Rakshasas' flags,
And flags and river reaching the sea
Gave it a cloud-covered look. (35)

The white umbrellas which were cut down
By Lakshmana's gleaming arrows
Fell in the rivers of blood
And were like the moon in Rahu's mouth.[5] (36)

The elephants, their trunks and legs cut down,
Fell in the river of blood;
And rendered lifeless by the arrows
Floated down like ships on the sea. (37)

The forest jackals came over
Wishing to have a good feed
In the field with so many elephants;
The musical instruments the Rakshasas left
Resembled the bodies of corpses. (38)

The howdahs on the necks of elephants
Set fire to by the *agneyastra*
Made those angry pachyderms look
Like bamboo forests on hills aflame. (39)

Bears came like billows in succession
To knock down the heads of the Rakshasas
And split them open with their nails
As if they were raiding anthills
In order to eat up the ants.[6] (40)

---

5. Rahu is the planet which causes the eclipse and is thought of here as a red snake.

6. A practice common with bears.

Soldiers able to subue *yalis*[7]
Along with riders of elephants and horses
And the bees swarming over their chaplets
Were all destroyed by Lakshmana's arrows.[8] (41)

Blood issuing from the wounds
Of defeated warriors everythere,
The vultures haunting the battlefield
Bathed in it to clean their heads! (42)

With the torrents of his arrows,
Lakshmana decimated the enemy
The way his father on a former day
From his one chariot took on and subdued
The Titans assailing him from many. (43)

As mountains, clouds and the constellations
Were swept by the tempest of Dissolution,
So the heads and bodies which were severed
Came and fell in the yard of the *homa*.[9] (44)

The chapleted crowned heads flying in the air
Severed by the tusker Lakshmana
Came and broke the *purna kumbha*[10]
Consecrated by Vedic mantras. (45)

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7. A mythical beast, being an elephant and a lion combined.

8. This and the next stanza provide examples of a poetical ornament called yamaka, playing with the same word with different meanings.

9. The place where the yaga was being performed.

10. A pot filled with water, sanctified with mantras and betokening good luck. Its getting smashed is a bad omen for Indrajit.

Rivers of blood rolling down
Musty elephants and their angry riders
Came in billows and put out
The flame of the yaga fire. (46)

Severed by Lakshmana's arrows
The hands of the red-haired Rakshasas
Fell from the sky with the swords they held
With the noise of thunder, and killed in the process
The buffaloes and sheep meant for the *yaga*. (47)

The warriors who were like elephants,
Blood flowing from their cheeks
As must from the elephants themselves,
Afraid and dispirited
Hid themselves in the river of blood
Flowing in the *yaga* ground. (48)

The burning shafts hitting everyone,
Their legs, heads and hands severed,
Many felt giddy, rested shivering
On their lances stuck on the ground
And revealed their intestines. (49)

Many came to Lakshmana
Carrying on their bent shoulders
Their sons' bodies which had been hit
And were revealing their entrails,
Their own entrails also showing! (50)

Crores of Rakshasa torsos,
Limbs shorn, danced in group after group
Upsetting numerous covered vessels
Full of ghee, toddy and puffed rice. (51)

Like the wind, like a venom, like a weaver's thread,
Like a disease, like a little runnet in milk,
Lakshmana's arrows found their way
Everywhere to ruin and wreck. (52)

Indrajit saw wherever he looked
His great army like a sea
Tossed about by a fell wind
And looking like a ravaged grove. (53)

He saw no space that was not filled
With the corpses of elephants touching the sky,
And seas full of billowing blood
Bearing horses, chariots, heads and bodies. (54)

Heaps of warriors, lakhs and crores,
Who had come with him to wage this war,
He saw cut into pieces
By the shafts of one man
As well as rivers of blood
But not a single body whole! (55)

Some more cruel than poison,
Mouth dry, in terror, approached him;
Others equally fierce but helpless,
Feeling abandoned died where they were. (56)

The *yaga* fire extinguished,
The grass and sundries scattered,
The invocatory texts forgotten,
Indrajit rose like a smoking flame! (57)

Then all those who had not been killed
In that field by the rain of arrows
Came and surrounded the Rakshasa,
And the huge monkey army entered. (58)

The killing of his army a thousand *padmas*[11] strong
In the course of a moment
And the bowmanship of that pure one
Filled him with grief, anger and resentment. (59)

He saw with nis own eyes
The slaughter which disturbed the earth,
The wholesale destruction of his men
And the sages wringing their hands.[12] (60)

His pride destroyed the silence prescribed ruined
The strength of his army decimated;
The sound of the mantras made awry;
He said to himself as follows; (61)

"Of the twentyfive *vellams* of my army
Only ten *akshouhinis* now remain;
This fine sacrifice is ruined---
It will be childish to proceed with it. (62)

"The fierce fire of the sacrifice
Has, it is obvious, died down;
This is a sign that success
Will not come to me today. (63)

"Let that be. But why should I
Invite the shame by being here
That I dare not face these mere men?
Have I not still got my strength
To face this on-going fight? (64)

"Should I stick here just distressed
That the *yaga* with its mantras has gone up in smoke
To give rise to the sneer of the gods,
'His might can face only us, not men'?" (65)

11. A huge number.
12. Those who were conducting his sacrifice, or perhaps the good ones fearing its outcome.

While he was saying this to himself,
The monkeys flinging hills and trees,
The Rakshasa corpses and dead elephants
Made their enemy run helter skelter. (66)

Those who remained hid under each other;
Trembled as the arrows flew;
Their entrails squeezed out, bodies split,
Their anger was spent like subdued elephants'. (67)

Lakshmana's arrows and the monkey's hills
Fell midst the sea of the Rakshasa army
Like ceaseless rain and dark clouds
When the tempest rages at Dissolution. (68)

Hanuman plying his trees and making
The Rakshasa army scatter all over,
Angry himself, approached Indrajit
With taunts to make him even more angry. (69)

"O Expert in crores and crores of deceits!
You would not listen to my pleading
And my words of good council.
What happened to your slaying of Sita
And marching towards the north
With your men in Kubera's chariot? (69 a)

"No, we did not catch you hiding
In your sea of an army shaped like a wheel.
Nor did we hear the twang of your bow.
When did you return after killing
Rama's kinsfolk in Ayodhya?
Was your sacrifice well conducted?
Did it end successfully? (70)

That you should have shown your bowmanship
To Bharata, that blameless King,
Who bears on his sturdy shoulders
All the world like Adisesha
And get back with your life and all,
Is no doubt not a rare thing for you! (71)

"Did you display your skill in archery
To the youngest of the four brothers,
The sons of him who helped the gods
By killing Sambara the bowman in the sky? (72)

"When Lakshmana's arrows pierce you,
Hot as fire, strong as diamond,
And blood flows from your ears,
Your mouth and your eyes,
Won't all the trickery you will employ
From behind the shelter of Lanka
Along with your zeal for fighting
Come to a conclusion today? (73)

"Is it the serpent noose or Brahmastra,
Siva's missile or Vishnu's discus
That you will be using now?
How in the past they terrified us!
Enough! enough! Death stalks you now. (74)

With all your boons, your skill in witchcraft,
Heavenly weapons, and your strength,
We are determined to cut your head off.
Be sure we will not go back on this. (75)

Even if Siva and Brahma
And Vishnu on his serpent bed
Should come to help you, you will surely die.
Don't you throb in your left? Do you hope to live? (76)

"There is a bowman who has vowed
That he will kill you. He has killed your army
And challenges you to meet him.
Do you think the twang of his bow
Is an ingredient for your *yaga*? (77)

"The gods, the sages and the denizens
Of the various worlds are gathered here
To witness the fight between you
And the brother of the guardian of the three worlds.
Why waste further time?
Are you not sure to die"? asked
The great guardian of Dharma. (78)

When Indrajit heard those words
He breathed fire, flashed his teeth in scorn,
And said, "How dare you insult me
To my face?" and proceeded: (79)

"Have you, who in every fight
Were defeated and destroyed
But revived against all rules
Forgotten what happened to you?
Is it because you wish to die
That you now challenge me?
Have you, tucked up in your hand,
The medicine that will bring back to life
These numerous creatures when they are killed? (80)

"Whether it is Lakshmana or Rama himself
Or whoever else that will intervene,
Let them all come! The monkey *vellam*
Clan by clan will be destroyed.
The sages and gods will surely see
My victory and those men's distress. (81)

"So long as my bow and shoulders remain
Will any escape unless they hide?
I will kill all the crookback monkeys
And the two men, their bodies here,'
And pursuing them to heaven
Kill their very soul there!
No drug will bring back their lives. (82)

"'His *yaga* has been ruined today.
We have won', you are bragging. Cease to brag.
I will not abate. My valour will be shown
Through my arrows which will destroy
Each one of you individually! (83)

"I will not brag like you, say more;
You only gave me viçtories;
Running away is not winning.
When I glared at you, did you stand?
Are you now lying dead or alive? (84)

"Stand! stand!" said he, eyes darting fire;
Donned a glittering armour and quiver;
Covered his fingers with gloves;
Bore his bow; ascended his chariot;
And set a-twanging his bowstring. (85)

He blew his conch; the heavenly maidens
Hit their eyes with their hands
Exclaiming that in a moment
He would destroy everything.
The gods were perturbed. Siva and Brahma
Predicted, "A great fight will take place today". (86)

"The great *yaga* collapsed because of our penance;
He will not survive. Fate has brought him here.
We will see him killed by Lakshmana's arrow".
Said they, their hearts rising in hope. (87)

When the monkeys heard that twang
They forgot their heroism.
The trees and rocks they held in their hand
Fell down. Then they too fell,
Saying, "We are dead indeed"!
And then rose up and ran away! (88)

The great chiefs stood. The common ones
Were disturbed and left their place
Like the seas at Dissolution
When a tempest blows and rends them.
Hanuman at that time tore up
A huge mountain which was near. (89)

"Stay, fellow; stay, stay", said Indrajit,
The death of Death. "You spoke all that
And take up a hilll in the hope
That you can kill me in the sight of the gods?
Not for nothing are you a monkey!
But you are a good fighter.
Come then, come. Come", said he. (90)

When they saw Hanuman with a rock
Confronting that hero of heroes
Standing with a bow in his hand,
The gods were worried as to what might happen
To the mighty-shouldered Hanuman,
And even his father was alarmed. (91)

He flung that adamantine hill
And sparks flew in each direction.
All the worlds shrank in fear
Saying, "A thousand thunders are here",
The Rakshasa crowd was dislocated. (92)

His ear-rings flashing, Indrajit
With shoulders lilke Mount Méru
Shouting enough to make the globe tremble
Reduced that mountain which Hanuman flung
Frightening thunder itself
Into powder. The gods unwinking
Saw the result, not the cause! (93)

When he took up another hill,
A torrent of fierce arrows
Hit his chest, shoulders, legs,
Hands, neck, forehead and eyes
Raging like the god of Fire. (94)

Standing against a mountain with bamboos,
And fighting the Rakshasa darkness,
The fiery arrows stuck in him
Looking like rays, Hanuman resembled,
Soaked in blood and red all over
The sun rising in the sky. (95)

When he got tired, and Angada and others
Burning with wrath came to his rescue,
Indrajit would not look at them, saying,
"Stay, stay, you! Where has he gone
Who died and went to heaven twice?" (96)

When they came again and again
He said in wrath, "Does a lion
Chase an elephant or a monkey?
Show me one who can fight me a while.
Will you burst with wrath and die? (97)

"Have you not seen Hanuman?
Are you mightier than he
Do I not still have my bow
And the strength of my shoulders?
Are you not the same as before?
What new strength have you acquired?
Show me the man.[13] and after that
Take to your mountains!" (98)

Noting his search for Lakshmana
They flung more and more of rocks
And trees on him, besetting him.
The rain of arrows continued
Which could penetrate Meru and go beyond,
Not one but many crores of crores
Making them both sad and weak. (99)

"Isn't your army getting reduced?"
Said Vibhishana to Lakshmana,
"With that dark cloud raining his arrows?
His *yaga* is over. Go and finish him".
And Lakshmana plunged into the fight. (100)

The worthy Hanuman, his mind clear
And face abloom, came forward then,
"Get quickly on my shoulders, Father",
Said he, and Lakshmana agreed
Happy and at peace. The gods
Gave up their fear, and Hanuman trotted
On a long circuit bearing the hero. (101)

---

13. Adopting the Kazhakam reading.

Dark as if made up of a thousand clouds
In a chariot drawn by a thousand horses,
Indrajit stood before Lakshmana
Who was his peer in every way
As he was riding on Hanuman
Who rose and filled up all the space
Like the thousand-named Vishnu of yore. (102)

The arrows which Lakshmana the sleepless shot
Were like fire, like thunder, like wandering demons,
Like hunger, like disease, like the unfailing result
Of evil deeds, like a battle-axe,
And like the devil's own dam. (103)

The Rakshasa countered each shot with its like;
He shot so many as to make one wonder
Where there could be any more in the world;
The sky, the quarters, the seas, all else
Were filled as if with the lashing rains
Of Dissolution at the end of the world. (104)

Then he sent a few shafts
As if they were a flock of sparrows.
And Lakshmana with a couple of his own
Prevented and scattered them
As if they were sparks of fire;
And Indrajit whirled in a thousand circles. (105)

The wheels of that whirlwind Indrajit's chariot
And the legs of the raging Hanuman
Went round and round to obliterate
All differences between rock and hill,
Trees, grass and small flags. (106)

The two heroes raised their arrows
And whirled around, so that none watching
Could make out which one was which;
The gods said marvelling, "Their like is none"
As they dashed against each other like two seas. (107)

The gods watching those flying arrows
Could not keep any track of them;
Neither their eyes nor minds could follow
There was no question of their keeping count;
Even the wind could not intervene.
They could be made out only by the wounds
Which they caused in the bodies they hit. (108)

The twang of their bowstrings sounding like thunder
All the directions were pulverised
And went up as if in smoke.
The fiery arrows rose up thundering
And blackened the stars in the sky.
The world was filled with fire and smoke. (109)

All the directions were blown up
As the twang of the bowstrings hit them like thunder;
The fiery arrows bit each other;
Their speed sent sparks flying;
The gods witnessed all this. (110)

The seas dried up; the mountains split;
The sun's body caught fire;
The trees were burnt; blood smelt scorched;
Isles rose in the sea; the earth lost its way. (111)

The sharp arrows scattering fire
The armies on both sides ran away
And did not stop anywhere near;
Elephants died; horses were killed;
The monkeys scattered; blood flowed
Like the sea; many were finished. (112)

The arrows shot by Rama's brother[14]
Went twisted, smoking, frying, blazing,
Scorching, left, right, separately,
All together and wide apart
And slanting in each direction. (113)

The arrows sent by his rival Rakshasa
Were like water, fire, mountains, clouds,
Thunder, the sea, the sun's chariot;
Siva's smile, the world's perspiration.[15] (114)

The arrows sent by the two of them
Sharp as the eyes of lovely maids
Pierced their chests under their armours,
Their shoulders, faces, thighs and legs. (115)

They bent their bows with their two ends
So that they resembled the second night's crescent,
And the gods seeing their bowmanship
Exclaimed, "When and which gods or Titans
Ever fought in such a way?" (116)

The arrows discharged here by them
Baked the world, scorched the planets,
Made the mouths of the gods dry.
They wondered if the worlds' end had come.
Their bows' twangs entering their ears
Was a torture to the *diggajas*. (117)

The spacious firmament shed its stars;
The sun shed his rays; the moon his fawn;
The sky shed its clouds; the mountains split;
The earth was splintered; all lives were lost. (118)

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14. Literally, "The dark lion's".
15. Swaminatha Aiyar gives the meaning, "The five-headed Siva and Meru the world's root."

Then the son of Ravana
Discharged twentyfive arrows
So as to pierce Lakshmana;
And he bending his bow
Discharged some fiery shafts
To penetrate and remove Indrajit's armour. (119)

The mighty Rakshasa then chose
And shot arrows which in the past
Had put Indra's tusker to flight
And cut and burnt even the gods,
Directing them at Hanuman's shoulders. (120)

Lakshmana saw blood streaming
From the virtuous Hanuman, making him look
Like the sun rising in the east,
And rained a tempest of arrows
Which broke and immobilised Indrajit's chariot
So as to make the spectators say,
"He has won the war this instant" (121)

When the gods saw that chariot destroyed
They shouted with joy; the Trinity were pleased:
And he, enraged like thunder,
Leapt into another chariot
And shot off ten arrows
Against Lakshmana's head
Which made him pant with agony. (122)

He panted, but recovering
Planted some crescent shafts on his body;
And before he could weed them out
Shot a special one at his chest
With the force with which Siva of old
Had kicked at the vitals of the god of Death.[16] (123)

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16. Reference to the story of Markandeya.

That arrow penetrated his armour and chest
And Indrajit became unconscious;
The gods hurrahed with joy;
And with a shaft like the midday sun
Lakshmana brought down his flag
And pierced his shoulders as well. (124)

The blood in his veins streaming out like fire,
He tottered like Meru, but recovered;
Then he shot nine hundred shafts
But was angered to find
That they did not pierce Lakshmana's armour. (125)

Again from his chariot with its thousand horses
He sent a thousand fierce shafts
Aimed at Lakshmana's vital spot;
But Rama's brother nóting them
Broke them down with a single arrow
And sent some arrows to snap the string
Of Indrajit's bow, and hit his body. (126)

"Is this bow here", Indrajit wondered,
"Vishnu's or Siva's?" and realised
That Lakshmana's shafts had pierced his armour
And he could do nothing to them.
His heart sank when he found
That he simply could not win. (127)

His uncle too realised that
And told Lakshmana, "Listen to me.
You have vanquished the gods' vanquisher.
This madcap is depressed. He will not survive". (128)

That fell Rakshasa enraged like Death
Twanging his bow for the seven worlds to hear,
His anger mounting his head challenged,
"Meet this", and shot the Wind missile,
And Lakshmana repelled it with the same weapon. (129)

He sent the Fire missile, repelled by the same;
He sent the Water missile, repelled by the same;
His heart black with malice he sent
The Sun missile which was repelled
By the enraged Lakshmana with the same! (130)

"Can you resist this", said he,
And despatched a "reed arrow";
"Like to like"; said Lakshmana,
And met it with a reed arrow".
Indrajit thought he would now despatch
An indestructible weapon.
And sent out the Brahmastra, saying
"Now indeed you are dead!" (131)

All those watching from heaven,
Siva, Brahma, the great sages,
Other ascetics and Indra---
The entire divine community---
Their hearts sinking, prayed hard,
"Let the young prince escape harm!" (132)

The brother of the Primal Lord with the discus
Saw that missile's blazing approach
To which the Badavagni at Dissolution
Might or might not bear comparison,
And gave it the regard due to it. (133)

"He must be thinking that the first time
I could not resist it with my own strength,
That I was powerless against it,
Was finished, and will be finished again,
It won't be right if I hide now
What I am capable of",
Thought Lakshmana and decided
That he too would speed the Brahmastra. (134)

"Let all be well with the world", he said,
Reciting the Vedic verse.
"Do not hurt the one who sent it.
Confine yourself to the single task
Of countering the astra sent",
Said he, and despatched his reply;
Stood and sent it, and the gods
Admired his concern for others. (135)

"Would the Brahmastra obeying orders
Not have killed Indrajit
While sparing heaven and earth
If Lakshmana had ordered it so?
But he deliberately asked it
Only to counter Indrajit's missile.
Free of meanness, Lakshmana
Has preserved Dharma", they rejoiced. (136)

As a thunderbolt opposed by a flame
Will depart the Brahmastra
Despatched by Indrajit disappeared
And Lakshmana's stood like a huge flame
Ready to burn the seven worlds and the sky. (137)

The scion of the solar race
Shot another shaft to prevent
The former from spreading to the sky.
And that darting fire brought it down
As poison removes poison. (138)

The gods saw it and were delighted.
"Is there", they said, "anything impossible
For these two?" and Siva said,
"You asked that question thoughtlessly.
Listen now to the truth. (139)

"These two are Nara and Narayana,
Our root and the Primal First Cause;
A great mystery even to those
Rid of the twin bonds of good and evil;
Beyond the Vedas; Ancient. (140)

"They have come into this world
In a way that thought cannot follow
Because Dharma is being destroyed,
To pull up by the roots the wicked ones
Responsible for destroying it.
None with mere intelligence
Can understand this mystery. (141)

"This Lakshmana is the one described
As worshipful, and in all things living.
His presence is not to be doubted;
And that one, the cause of all,
The runnet which makes milk into curds
Is the Lord and Chief, a mystery.
Try to understand this. (142)

"These were the ones on the milky ocean
To whom of yore you took your troubles.
They have come to destroy those hapless sinners
With their kin, and to preserve Dharma
Which is the source of all fortune",
Said the great god with the flaming hair. (143)

"We knew, and we did not know,
Caught by this mystery", said the gods.
"Our doubts are now over, cleared by you.
We have triumphed over the enemy,
Transcended our troubles, great foe of sin!"
Said they worshipfully to him. (144)

The Rakshasa then took up the astra of Vishnu
Saying, "If you can resist this,
Who will be able to vanquish you?
But you will not. You will die.
This can't fail", and sent it against him.
The pure one, to the world's confusion. (145)

The gods raised their hands to save themselves.
Others also did likewise.
Lakshmana saw it coming towards him
Efficient and never failing
And went forward to meet it
Recalling that he was himself Vishnu. (146)

He knew it would flatten the seven worlds;
He knew too that he was the God
Primeval whom nothing could remove.
It did not go against him but aside
And, circling him from left to right,
Went up, losing its fire and smoke
For the benefit of everybody. (147)

The gods danced lauding; the monkeys danced with joy;
The heavenly maidens bowed and danced;
The sages said, "You have saved all the worlds"
And danced with pleasure. Brahma too,
And the Hatchet god full-throated praised. (148)

Indrajit seeing wondered who he was.
"Is he the deity of that missile?" he asked.
"Whoever he may be, let him be!
I won't think more", he decided,
"But will end him sending Siva's missile". (149)

"I will use the Destroyer's missile
Which will end in a single day
All the creation made by Brahma",
He said to himself; and the gods in heaven,
Knowing this, were frightened
Stunned by the thought that he would spell the doom
Of all the worlds in an instant. (150)

"Given to me by Siva himself
After my penance of many days
And assured by him that it was given
Only to me and no one else,
He is sure to die", he thought,
"As none would be able to resist it." (151)

He offered it mentally due worship with flowers
And water, incense, sandal paste and food,
And ordered it, "Kill him and come back";
Straightened himself, drew the bowstring
Right back to his shoulder
And sent the arrow on its resistless course. (152)

Tridents, axes, hot shafts, flames,
Poisons, snakes, the two kinds of thunder,[17]
The many forms of death, black demons,
And heaps of huge devils
Generated by it filled the world. (153)

The fire of Dissolution followed it one way
  Causing affliction;
Fierce whirlwinds followed it another
  Causing destruction;
Terrible darkness beyond the seven seas
  Filled the world
While the seas themselves seemed all to gather
  In one place to wage war. (154)

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17. Of fire and water.

The great gods fled; all the sages
   Were distressed by the thought,
"This won't go waste; he is sure to be killed",
   While the monkeys which died,
Huddled together, defied calculation;
   And the inhabitants
Of the three worlds, the sun and the moon,
   Displaced, and having to quit
Wandered perplexed. (155)

The renowned Vibhishana saw it and sighed,
And terrified, perspired;
"Great Hero, Pure One", he asked,
"Can this be averted?"
To which Lakshmana replied with a laugh
While the monkey chieftains took shelter under him. (156)

To all those who cried to him, "Save us! Save us!"
He said, "Don't fear", raising his hand.
"Your safety is assured. I realise the terror.
Of the two worlds.
I will stay quiet no longer, but will employ
The missile of the Five-faced", he decided. (157)

Offering it his mental worship,
He commanded, "Destroy that missile
But do not destroy anything else";
Chose the appropriate arrow and sent it,
   And that, reaching the place
Where the enemy missile was, swallowed it
   At once with all its contents. (158)

Heaven cheered, earth cheered, the drums of the gods
   Beat their cheers of joy;
The seas cheered, the clouds cheered, and cheered too
   The arithmetic of the astro logers!
The Vedas cheered, and the goddess of Victory;
   Dharma cheered, and every thing else. (159)

The valorous one thus nullified
The weapon of Siva himself
The great god of Dissolution.
Indrajit himself more fell than Death
Was by this confounded.
And all the monkey chiefs could see
That Lakshmana was Vishnu's self. (160)

"Even if that Weapon has failed
To draw back now would be shameful;
My skill remains and will not fail",
Thought he, and sent a few arrows
Which sunk in Lakshmana's shoulders and forehea((161)

The Sun's son and others
Great warriors and strong,
Ceaseless rained their hills
To ford the Rakshasa sea.
And Indrajit determined
That they should all be killed
Shot hundred crores of arrows,
And seeing his uncle there
Standing near Lakshmana
Vented his wrath on him. (162)

"You carry a baton in your hand
And, against all decency,
Praise mere men, and follow them
A slave to mere fools;
Keep on saying the same thing
Like a drum repeating itself.
I will roll your head in the dust today
And depart taking that blame.[18] (163)

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18. Of killing my own uncle.

"Even for the sake of the three worlds
And an eye which can quell the foremost.[19]
Which hero who can withstand his foes
Will opt for a blameworthy life? (164)

"'As long as there is water, there is fish':
Our lives depend on their root
Ravana. With him we will die.
There will still be Lanka--- but you
Left alone, when you get your crown,
Whom will you rule then? (165)

"When my father in the past
Vanquished the grandfather of the gods
And shook Skanda's father[20] on his hill,
Did he depend on this strength
Which you are now seeking? (166)

"Being the head of all the Brahmins
Created by Brahma
You were in a position to command the gods.
But now you want to enjoy the treasures
Of Ravana, as a slave to a man!
Where is your shame? That is going with us! (167)

"Is not poverty far better
Than a life of betrayal
Joining those who jeered at your sister
And cut off her nose
And with Death for their ally
Will kill your brother and us
Bringing victory to one
Who was till now our vanquished foe? (168)

19. Could be even Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

20. Siva.

"When pierced by Rama's shaft, Ravana
Strong-shouldered lies on the earth for his mat,
Will you be falling on him and mourning
Or lauding the triumph of his conqueror,
Blessing him and falling at his feet?
What have you decided, victorious hero,
To do that day? (169)

"Will those mere men kill the King of Lanka
Who lost their lives and owe them now
To imported drugs? And will you succeed him?
My arrow will first send you to heaven
As I am not worried about the blame." (170)

Having heard those words with care,
Vibhishana nodded his head and smiled
And said, "Dear Sir, listen to me,
Sin is dreadful, virtue good. (171)

"I will befriend only virtue,
Not sin which will lead me to hell.
I will not live with an undying blame.
Never have I abandoned truth
Nor had any truck with falsehood.
I ceased to be Ravana's brother
The day he chose to commit sin. (172)

"I have never tasted toddy; or lied;
Never took anything by force;
Am not capable of trickery or witchcraft;
None has ever found fault with me---
Or has anyone including you?
How can it be then a fault
If I abandon one lust-led? (173)

"I told your father, 'She is the wife
Of one whom the three worlds worship,
The eldest and the God of gods.
It will be sinful to molest
That great symbol of chastity'.
This threw your father into a rage
And he ordered me to get out.
I got out. Will I now go to hell? (174)

"You are cruel; have no use for Dharma;
Follow only your own wishes.
If fame and heaven are going to be yours
By all means let them be.
If we sticking to virtue
And treading the path of good men
Can get but infamy and hell,
By all means, let us! (175)

"Knowing that sin can't overcome virtue
And what I do will conform to the right
I joined the God of gods.
Let what will come be fame or infamy.
Let me win or lose renown",
Said he, showing no anger. (176)

"All the renown which you will get",
Said Indrajit more fierce than thunder,
"Will depend on my crescent-head arrow.
What fame will you get other than death?"
And sent an arrow at his golden neck
Like the feathered Garuda. (177)

That arrow speeding like thunder,
Like fire, like poison, like Siva's trident,
Making the gods exclaim at its swiftness,
"Now indeed he is dead! he is dead!"
Lakshmana as they looked on
Broke into bits with a shaft of his. (178)

When that priceless arrow of his
Was broken, Indrajit the death of Death,
Hurled a spear which fell like the sun,
Frightening the seven worlds---
And the expert bowman
Shattered that too into bits. (179)

Enraged by the thought that a spear had been hurled
To kill him, Vibhishana sped like the wind
And with the rod of gold in his hand
Belaboured the charioteer with his whip
And laid him low with his milk-white horses. (180)

Standing on his ruined chariot
Indrajit shot a thousand crore arrows
On Vibhishana's shoulders, Lakshmana's arms
And the chests of the others
So that blood flowed like the sea
And he raised a shout to make the globe run! (181)

After that he realised
That no fight could be waged
With a chariot which could be broken
And before those who stood and watched
Could say, "He has disappeared",
Flew up to reach Ravana's side. (182)

27. INDRAJIT KILLED

While the monkeys were perturbed with doubts,
"He has gone up the sky", "He will work mischief",
Ravana saw his son near him
Blood flowing from his wounds
And, looking at him rapt in thought,
Said to him as follows: (1)

"The arrow marks on your shoulders proclaim
That your *yaga* is unfinished.
You look terribly tired,
Like a serpent with its hood shrunk
When Garuda approaches it.
Tell me what has happened." (2)

"Your brother put an end," he said,
"To all the stratagems and witchcraft;
The *yaga* was beset and broken up,
I rose in wrath, resumed the fight,
And discharged three invincible weapons,
But they were all rendered useless. (3)

"The great astra of Vishnu
The author of both earth and heaven,
Just went round the foe and left
What can be stronger than this?
You have made a dreadful enemy
Thanks to the sins of our race.
Lakshmana alone, if he angered
Can finish the three worlds. (4)

"Last time when I sent the Brahmastra
He did not send the same on me
Lest it should do harm to the world.
So it was that I won and returned.
But even when he was defeated
He was able to save himself.
Now too he can reveal his might,
And has decided to kill me. (5)

"Do not conclude from all this
That I am afraid of them", said he
Who had shaken all the world and won.
"If you will give up Sita
They will give up their anger.
Go back too, forgiving all harms.
I speak out of my love for you". (6)

When he said this, the King of Lanka,
His teeth flashing like the crescent moon,
Laughing till his shoulders shook
Said, "You don't want to fight anymore?
You are bewitched? Afraid of men?
Don't despair, my dear Sir!
I will kill those men with my single bow
And bring victory with me today. (7)

"My trust was not in those that died,
Nor in those that have survived,
Nor yet in your great strength, my son!
Myself alone took on this strife. (8)

"A fool's talk, Son! With my twenty shoulders
Why should I surrender Sita?
Better lose this bubble body in battle
And so gain fame immortal in song! (9)

"Though I should lose, while the Vedas remain
My name must remain as long as Rama's.
What is here today must go tomorrow---
Bodies die, but fame endures! (10)

"If I give up Sita, none of the gods
Will take me longer for what I am.
I will not die an easy death
Having held in thrall the ten directions. (11)

"Why talk more? Go to your residence
And pluck out the darts from your shoulders.
Take rest. Spend the night in ease"---
And rising like an angry tiger,
He roared, "Bring forth my chariot". (12)

Looking at him and falling at his feet,
The one destined to die replied,
"Father, remit your wrath, and forgive
The words of advice I gave you.
After I am dead and gone
You will see the good in them"
And got into his divine chariot. (13)

He took with him the numerous weapons
And all the knowledge he had been given;
And giving away to those who wanted them
Whatever they wished to have,
He looked sideways at his father
And eyes filling with tears
Took his departure from that place. (14)

The Rakshasas of Lanka rose
And going quickly to him said,
"Hill-shouldered, we will not leave you;
We are going to die with you"
And went round him respectfully.
To them he said, "Look after the King.
Don't be perturbed. I will go
And kill those men this very day". (15)

He went first through the arena
Of the swords and arrows of the eyes
Of love-lorn maidens all around
Who bowed to him and blessed him,
Felt, seeing him, their mouths go dry,
Sighed, melted inwardly
And were frightened for his sake. (16)

Lakshmana, his bow in his hand
Looked at the sky and remarked,
"Vibhishana, that reprobate
Must have simply gone away.
He doesn't seem to be about,
When he heard the commotion
Of the chariot drawn by a thousand horses. (17)

That unique chariot which could go
In any direction in the three worlds
Came along rattling, the hills on its paths
Ground into small pebbles,
Looking like a peak of Meru
Set on wheels,beflagged and thundering.
Its gems scattering lightning,
As if Badavagni was up. (18)

That enemy chariot came along
Its brightness turning night into day,
Confusing the seas, displacing the globe,
Dislodging the sun and the moon,
Agitating the monkeys' entrails,
Making the mountains change places,
The earth tear, its dust rise aloft
And grinding the spread hood
Of Adisesha darker than night! (19)

The Rakshasa army made a great noise
So that the gods were terrified;
And the monkeys, their minds disturbed, perspired;
The warlike Indrajit broadcast his arrows;
And Lakshmana confronting him
And starting the war, the noise which arose
Deafened the directions, and the world
Was ablaze with fire and smoke. (20)

Vibhishana with reverence
Told Lakshmana, "If you let off
That victor now, the garland of conquest
Will never be yours", and thereupon
Lakshmana sent out of his bow
Arrow after thundering arrow
Which perplexed the world, displaced the mountains
And frightened even Adisesha
Resting underneath the ground. (21)

Each of the combatants discharging
A thousand sharp arrows fiercer than fire,
They burnt the scattered bodies
Of the monkeys and the Rakshasas.
There was no end to those who rolled
On the ground in each direction.
The arrows they sent against each other
Fierce as fire poured like rain. (22)

The arrows sent by the fierce Rakshasa
Were snapped by Lakshmana on their way;
But those sent by Lakshmana
Made holes in Indrajit's body.
Indrajit's arrows did not go through
Lakshmana's armour, but did penetrate
Hanuman's, body like a snake
Entering its hole, but he didn't feel them. (23)

Then Lakshmana sent a sharp arrow
To destroy the venomous Indrajit's armour.
When it made a big hole,
Indrajit, eyes darting fire,
Sent in wrath well-chosen shafts,
But these did not hit their mark;
And the gods getting to know this
Raised a hurrah in their joy. (24)

Finding that his arrows did not prevail,
Indrajit sent out a spear
More fiery than the sun
Given to him by Brahma's son,
Directing it to go quickly.
But Lakshmana seeing it come,
Severed it with an arrow
More powerful than a curse
By the seven well-known sages.[1] (25)

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1. Atri, Bhrigu, Kutsa, Vasishtha, Gautama, Kashyapa and Angirasa.

Thousands of arrows sharp like nails
Entered Indrajit's body,
And blood flowing out of it
It grew dry--- and the Sun's scion[2]
Shivered with his arrows again and again
The quiver in which Indrajit carried his shafts.[3] (26)

"So long as his chariot lasts
He cannot be rendered powerless"
Lakshmana realised clearly.
"My arrows too do no harm
To the horses which are as strong as ever".
And so he sent off a shaft
To sever the charioteer's head
And made it, huge as a hill,
Fall and roll on the ground. (27)

That huge and bright chariot of gold
Without one to drive it
Resembled a young ascetic
Without a guru to rule his senses,
Or a prostitute who sells her love for money. (28)

Driving that chariot with its galloping horses
Himself, while also plucking out his arrows
Indrajit discharged those same shafts
On Lakshmaṇa, Hanuman and others
And shouted in triumph to everyone's terror. (29)

"This is a hero of heroes;
Which famous one can equal him?
He is the brave man who, even in death,
Would not lose his courage",
Said the gods and rained heavenly flowers. (30)

2. Lakshmana.
3. According to Gopalakrishnamachariar, but Swaminatha Aiyar's edition says that Indrajit shivered Lakshmana's quiver.

"All the arrows sent against him
He plucks and throws back at me",
Said Lakshmana. "His hand is steady;
Mind like body unperturbed.
A crore of arrows doesn't tire him.
True valour will surely end with him". (31)

"O hero. he may drive his chariot
Into the sky; give up the fight
And take to witchcraft; cross those clouds
And plan mischief. This villain, you will find,
Except by day cannot be killed", (32)

Said Vibhishana to Lakshmana;
To whom the latter replied,
"Why should he not die today?
My shaft will go wherever he goes;
He is now exhausted; you will see
Victory obtained right now". (33)

Even as he said this,
The sun arose on the other side
Resembling Indrajit himself,
The sky behind him like his blood,
His thousand rays like his arrows,
His chariot also golden like his. (34)

All the gods shouted with joy,
"Day has dawned, the sun is here
To end the darkness of the Rakshasas.
Indrajit's cruel magic weakened
He will soon be meeting his end". (35)

Vibhisana, the far-sighted,
Said, "Lakshmana, ever renowned,
So long as Indrajit is in the car
Gifted to him by Siva,
And carries his bow in his hand
He is destined not to be killed". (36)

The expert in the science of archery
Could see that the green horses couldn't be killed.
Nor the chariot wheels be broken,
And so skilfully separated
The wheel, the axle and the pins. (37)

When the jewelled chariot was thus dismantled
All the horses went away
As birds flying from a tree
Whose trunk is hewed by a sharp axe. (38)

From the floor of the ruined chariot
Indrajit shot off all the weapons
That were there; and Lakshmana
Cutting them down, he flew up at once
Making a noise which tore the worlds.
All heard that noise, but none saw him! (39)

The dark and doughty Indrajit
By the strength of his boons
Showered a torrent of stones
And the monkey heroes
Unable to see their way
Could not run but bit the ground,
Their hearts and bodies scattered. (40)

Lakshmana, the bull-like hero,
Saw nothing but the rain of stones
Because of the machination
Of the one concealed in the sky;
So he sent his shafts all over
Without ceasing, covering all
The way that Vishnu with his body[4]
Covered all existing space. (41)

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4. As Trivikrama.

All directions were eclipsed;
Indrajit in his hiding
Seemed to be ebbing in strength;
He was like a gory vapour
In a crowd of dark clouds;
And Lakshmana seeing it concluded: (42)

"His bow cannot be broken
But his hill-like shoulder can"---
And so with an arrow crescent- tipped
He sliced off his hand
And it fell to the ground
With its priceless jewels and bow. (43)

When that fiery crescent shaft
Hit that doughty jewelled hand,
It fell down to the ground
As at Dissolution time,
A fierce wind sweeping the sky
Will bring down a cloud from it
With the painted rainbow it might carry. (44)

The shoulder and the hand of the hero
Clutching his strong bow
Severed and fallen on the ground
Were throbbing nevertheless
Pulverising trees and stones
And terrorising the monkeys
As if the snake bearing our world
Had caught the crescent moon
And dragging it down to earth
Was throbbing with it on the ground. (45)

"The sun has not fallen", said the gods,
"Nor the moon, nor the mountain Meru;
But Indrajit's golden shoulder has!
If such is the fate of one's life
Why should one still love it
Seeing it is no more than a toy? (46)

When Lakshmana, the image of Dharma
Severed the diamond hand of him
The black-hearted son of the man of might
To whom a lie was but a trifle,
The Rakshasas who witnessed the sight
Felt that their heads had been severed. (47)

When this was happening here
The sea of the monkey army
With their nails, teeth, trees and hills
Preventing the Rakshasas
From returning to Lanka
Sent them as new tenants to heaven! (48)

Like a dark cloud in the rainy season
Indrajit came forward and said,
"I will now use the trident given me
By Siva the red-haired, blue-necked god
Against you who don't seem to know
Our ancestry, so that you shall leave
This world before I do! (49)

As if he was the typhoon
Of Dissolution, its thunder or its fire,
Or Death with a trident in hand
Come to kill him, Indrajit appeared;
And the brother of the King of Ayodhya
Thought, "This is the time to kill him". (50)

"If Rama is indeed the god
Of righteousness known only to the Vedas,
Deserving the worship of the Vedic,
Kill", he said, "this moon-fanged one,"
Placing a crescent-mouthed arrow
In his bow, and drawing the string
Fully up to his ears---
The straight one putting the world straight. (51)

That fire-mouthed arrow, a very god,
Which threw Vishnu's discus in the shade,
Indra's thunderbolt, Siva's trident
And the missile of Brahma,
Sped and cut off Indrajit's head
The gods raining down flowers! (52)

Before that severed head shot up
Could come down upon the earth,
The body of that bad man
With its trident, torso stuck with shafts,
Fell as if it had been struck
With the lightning and thunder of Dissolution. (53)

Two ear-rings flashing like two moons,
A red tuft blazing hot like the sun,
His head came crashing down to earth
As if the sun itself had fallen. (54)

As when life leaves a body
Along with its feelings
Its senses and mental faculties
Scatter and disappear,
The Rakshasasa, when Indrajit died,
Growing dispirited
Ran away to fortressed Lanka
Leaving their weapons also behind. (55)

When the greatest of bowmen died this way.
The gods exulting that the reign
Of Lanka's King would now be over
Hurrahed, throwing away their clothes
Like those religious sects who are wedded
To non-killing, and whose gods stand naked[5]. (56)

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5. The Jains.

The boon-giving first of gods,[6]
Siva, Indra and the others
Expert in Vedas appeared on earth,
Standing visibly together.
They did not, out of their graciousness.
Hide themselves. Even the monkeys saw them. (57)

The saying that those who practise virtue
Will not die was proved by the fact
That all the monkeys killed by that Rakshasa,
Praised by the gods regained their lives. (58)

Under flowers strewn by the gods
Lakshmana marched, mounted on Hanuman
And preceded by Angada happy
And bearing in his hand the head which had fallen. (59)

Doughty-shouldered, his self-blame decling,
The joy wi'hin him surging like a spring,
Indra[7] saw the son of him
Who had churned the sea for the sake of the gods[8]
Carrying in his hand the severed head. (60)

"I was" said Indra, "feeling wretched
That the stain which was left on me
Like the one on the moon at night
Will never disappear.
But through the grace of Dharma
That distress is now removed.
What more can I desire?
How can I now decline? (61)

---

6. Vishnu.

7. Adopting the Kazhakam version Gopalakrishnamachariar's attributes this to Rama.

8. Vali.

"I have seen in the hand of the lad
Blessed by Rama the head of one
Who won against me and made such noise.
The heads of the Rakshasas are all now down,
While my own with my parasol will now go up!" (62)

Those around said in their joy,
"Sir, you have brought the wicked head
Of the one who had conquered the gods.
Now the gods can raise *their* heads,
The sea-girt earth, Indra and the Vedas. (62 a)

Rama, his mind unperturbed,
Sure that Lakshmana with Dharma's aid
Would win against the crafty foe
Had been waiting for his return
As his brother Bharata
Doing penance was waiting
For his own return safe and sound. (63)

Who will be able to tell
Whether the tears which flowed without cease
From the eyes he fixed on his brother's return
From the field of battle
Were caused by love or sorrow,
Joy or the pity which melts the bones? (64)

At the feet of the hero coming forward,
Eyes filled with tears, joyful and proud,
Was placed as a tribute the severed head
With its flaming hair and flashing teeth. (65)

He looked at that head, and his brother's shoulders;
At the strong Hanuman standing beside him;
At Lakshmana's bow; and thought of what
The gods had done; and the killing---
But uttered no word in his joy. (66)

The great one never living for himself,
Embraced his brother when he fell at his feet,
A dark cloud now flecked with red,
A black hill spread over with the sun's beams,
The blood on Lakshmana leaving their imprint
On his own shoulders and chest. (67)

"My heart is warm", said he to Lakshmana,
"With the thought that now Sita,
The daughter of the King with lordly elephants,
Will soon be joining me.
You have justified the saying
Current in this world of ours
That he who has a younger brother
Need not fear any foe!" [9] (68)

He detached his quivers, undid and removed
The armour enclosing his chest and shoulders,
Embraced him often with his own
Golden shoulders, and so removed
All traces of the wounds sharp shafts had inflicted. (69)

"Jewel among men, this victory
Is not your doing; nor Hanuman's;
Nor that of any of the gods.
This is Vibhishana's gift to us",
Said he, happy on this side of the field. [10] (70)

---

9. A Tamil proverb.

10. The next chapter will shift to the other side, Ravana's.

The great one never living for himself
Embraced his brother when he fell at his feet;
A dark cloud now locked with red,
A black hill spread over with the sun's beams;
The blood on Lakshmana leaving its imprint
On his own shoulders and chest (67)

"My heart is warm", said he to Lakshmana
"With the thought that now Sita
The daughter of the King with lordly elephants
Will soon be joining me.
You have justified the saying
Current in this world of ours
That he who has a younger brother
Need not fear any foe".[9] (68)

He detached his quivers, undid and removed
The armour enclosing his chest and shoulders,
Caressed him often with his own
Golden shoulders, and so removed
All traces of the wounds sharp shafts had inflicted (69)

"Jewel among men, this victory
Is not your doing; nor Hanuman's;
Nor that of any of the gods.
This is Vibhishana's gift to us,"
Said he, happy on this side of the field.[10] (70)

---

9. A Tamil proverb.

10. The next chapter will shift to the other side, Ravana's.

28. RAVANA'S GRIEF

The messengers crossed the sea of wailing
As well as that of blood,
And entering Lanka's gate, the stomach
As it were of Mount Meru,
Ran with the news to Ravana. (1)

The Rakshasis swarmed in every yard
And wailed like black *anriḷ* hens
And the messengers going to Ravana
Thought, "Ruined today is Lanka"! (2)

Seized with fear, teeth chattering,
Mouths, minds and feet atremble
As well as their bodies,
They told him, "Your son is no more". (3)

Those who were near him--- the gods,
Slim dancing maidens and others
Saying, "The world will be finished today",
Ran away and hid themselves. (4)

His eyes discharging fire and smoke,
He drew his sword from its scabbard
And swept off the heads of those messengers
With his billowing hands, and himself fell down. (5)

It looked as if Dissolution's fire
Took birth that day in Ravana,
Issuing from his mouth, fed by his sighs,
Gleaming through his eyes, each time he felt bitter. (6)

As though Sesha bearing the world
And the world that he was bearing
Had changed places left to right,
He fell off his seat and lay distressed
Like the sea when poison emerged from it. (7)

His anger blazing like a fire,
His love and distress exceeding,
His twenty eyes looking like flames
Dropped tears like melted copper. (8)

The rows of teeth in his mouths
Grinding produced a noise
As if mountains were splintered
By thunder in the rainy season,
When he struck the ground with his palms
It opened in fissures
And through those fissures shot up
The sea water from below. (9)

"My boy!" he would scream; "Great son!" he would shout;
"My father!"[1] "My life!" I older than you
Am still alive!" as if a spear
Had entered a wound caused by burning. (10)

"Indra's enemy in now no more!
Are the gods now relieved rejoicing?
Are Siva and the skulking Vishnu
Rid for ever of their enemy? (11)

"The ash-smeared Siva and discused Vishnu
Hid themselves in hill and sea;
Rid of bother they will now swank
On their bull and Garuda. (12)

---

1. An affectionate way of calling one's son.

"The aerial cars and the heavenly gangs
Scattered in different directions
And could not regain their seats.
Have they to thank mean men
For getting them back now? (13)

"Those bad messengers said
An evil man killed my darling,
And he is gone?" he said, and called
Him by name many times
Feeling hot and miserable. (14)

He would rise up, sit down, walk, cry;
Wail, feel weak, and perspire;
Get up, fall down; glare, close his eyes;
Plough the earth with his body, whirl and roll! (15)

"O dear!" said one head; "Shall I still rule?"
asked another;
"A caitiff I gave you over to the enemy",
Said a third, "and am still alive!" (16)

"You are not embracing me with your strong shoulders
With their sandal-paste", said a fourth head;
And a fifth, "O bowman, is it right
That a doe should consume a tiger?" (17)

"You withstood the weapons hurled
By the blue-necked and the discus-armed,
And drove them away. Could you not
Roar down Lakshmana?" asked a head. (18)

"Are you dead, forsaking me?
Is this not a betrayal?
Will you never come back?
My heart is sore; I am alone and afraid",
Another head lamented loud. (19)

"Will I see in the battlefield
Frequented by carrion crows
Your severed head decked with Indra's crown
And the victory chaplet on top of it?"
Asked another of the heads. (20)

"Will the carp-eyed Yaksha women cease now
To feel in fear their marriage-strings
As they used to all these days
When they heard the twang of your bow?"
Asked another of those heads. (21)

"O tireless one!" said another head,
"Death dare not have faced you
And taken you to his domain.
Which is the world you have gone to then,
Deceiving and hiding away from me?" (22)

Lamenting loud and pining thus
He rose and reached the battlefield
Swift as thought, seeking the body
Of his son there --- in a place
Red as the sky at Dissolution. (23)

All his servants, gods downwards,
Immediately followed him,
Worried as to what might happen
Now to the three worlds, (24)

When the demons and birds of prey saw him,
Some wept; some pretended love
And touched his feet; some slept on;
And some hid behind the elephant corpses. (25)

Crores and crores of horses,
The bodies of the valiant Rakshasas,
Visored elephants and chariots
He turned over, seeking the corpse
Of his son all day long. (26)

Tears streaming from all his eyes,
His heart a ghee-fed blazing fire
He saw with his own eyes a hand
Huge and clutching a strong bow. (27)

An epauletted shoulder
Carrying a quiver and arrows
And an arm like a fire-eyed serpent
He lifted with his own hands
And placed them upon his head. (28)

Exhaling long as if he was dying
He hugged that hand with his strong chest,
Put it round his neck,
Crowned his head with it,
Raised it to touch his eyes,
Smelt it and melted in anguish. (29)

He saw the hand, and then he saw
That dark sea his body!
He fell on it, and the cascade of his tears
Flowed over and hid the Rakshasa corpses. (30)

That chest covered with a rain of arrows
To his chest covered with a rain of tears
He raised and clasped, and wailed incessant.
Who has ever suffered as he? (31)

He would pluck those shafts off his chest:
Break them; faint; smell; embrace;
"I will burn the sun and the seven worlds
Today, grind them in my mouth"? he raged. (32)

"Along with the three great gods
Will his anger consume the three worlds?"
Asked the gods and the sages
And dare not show their faces anywhere. (33)

He did not find the head and wondered,
"Has that man walked away with it?"
And his wounds opened afresh,
Cried, sobbed and railed enough
To break open the sky above him! (34)

"Were the *diggajas* and Siva's hill
The only easy things for me?
While those men are still alive
Who took away my son's life and head
Why do I, wretch, still bear my life? (35)

"I saw Alkapuri and Indra's city
Go up in flames and made all the worlds mine;
And see today jackals eat
The chapleted head of my son.
The life I lead[2] is worse than a dog's. (36)

"Those who went out with my son
Against the enemy have all died;
While the two ascetics with the monkeys
Are all alive. What further proof
Does one need of Ravana's might? (37)

"If your wives should come to me---
Gandharvas, Yakshas, Siddhas, Rakshasas---
Better than Lakshmi, and ask me
To produce their husbands for them
And fall down in front of me,
Will my past triumphs past against death
Enable me only to cry with them? (38)

2. Literally, "The food I eat"

"I won great victories in the past;
Attained all the wealth of Indra
And could do whatever I wanted.
Because of a pretty woman
I am now obliged to do for you
What you should have lived to do for me.
Who in the world is more wretched than I"? (39)

All this he said, took up his son
Called him aloud, grief-striken and yearning
And carried him lovingly into the city,
The Rakshasis wailing and falling around.
The noise which was made by those who saw him
Filled all the ten directions. (40)

Great was the number of those women
Who plucked out their eyeballs, cut their necks,
Cut up their chests and pulled out what was inside,
Pulled out their tongues and lives together,
Unable to bear their grief. (41)

They saw him bringing in the body
Of his doughty-shouldered son
Who had won great victories in many places,
Without its head and its crown,
And the tears flowing from their eyes
Indicating their love and sorrow
Ran like a flood and joined
The waves of the dark sea. (42)

Eyes shedding blood, he entered his palace
While the Rakshasa maids who loved Indrajit
Dearer than their lives clutched their heads
With their tender hands, and pretty as pictures
Fell on the ground and rolled and rolled. (43)

Maya's daughter[3] came then
The rack of her dark hair reaching her heels,
Beating her breasts with her lotus hands
With just an apology of a waist
To bear with her middle that dark rack. (44)

Hand on her head, she came walking
As if treading on burning coals,
Tottering, her heart filled with love
And fell upon her son's body.
Like a peacock hit by the arrow
Of a hunter set on killing
And falling on a mountain. (45)

She did not breathe or feel,
Her body still as if lifeless;
Neither spoke nor perspired nor sobbed;
Only by degrees regained herself,
Opened her mouth and began to wail. (46)

"In the days when you grew like the crescent moon
I did penance that your bow
Might win against Indra.
What is the sin I have committed
To see you thus without your head?
Why, alas! do I cling like a fool
To this impermanent life? (47)

"My darling, my beauty, my rare ambrosia!
You who like very Death
Triumphed over Vishnu and Siva!
Unique in the three worlds!
Mighty in battle! How can I live
Without seeing your lotus face? (48)

3. Mandodari, Indrajit's mother.

In the days when you were crawling
Your anklets jingling
You brought two lion cubs
And set them fighting
And watched the fun in the yard!
When will I unfortunate
See such a sight again? (49)

"O my tusker! I should like to see again
What you did as a child, inviting the moon
To come down to earth, and he came;
And you took him in your hands and said,
"Don't be afraid" and tried to rub off
The mark on his face mistaken for a rabbit.
Won't you rise and enact that scene? (50)

"Are you lost in this deep sleep
As if on a bed of flowers
Because of the spell cast on you
By Yakshinis, Rakshasis, Vidyadharis---
Poor women in love with you,
Their faces moons without a spot---
Or because you are tired of war? (51)

"My son who won all the wars
In which Siva and the other gods took part
And secured the three worlds
To be killed by a mere man!
As if Meru towering to the sky
Collapsed in a breeze set up by a fan![4] (52)

4. Adopting the Swaminatha Aiyar reading instead of Gopalakrishnamachariar's "At the kick of an atom".

"The sea of the Rakshasa army
Has completely dried up
Killed by the anger of mere men
Like a bale of cotton consumed by fire.
It cannot come back to life,
I fear, I fear that tomorrow
The same fate will befall Lanka's King,
Thanks to that Sita who is nothing
But venom in the form of ambrosia!" (53)

As she wailed and invoked in this way,
The King of the Rakshasas said,
"All this grief has befallen us
Because of that Sita.
With my sword I will kill
That stone-hearted, treacherous woman",
And straightaway ran to do so. (54)

Seeing him run, Pot Belly
A stout-hearted fellow
Fearing that he was crowning himself
With a terrible shame,
Ran after him, fell at his feet,
And bowed and said, "O King!
This will bring disgrace to your fame",
And proceeded to say further: (55)

"You have so far won all the wars
    And acquired all the fame
But now an irremovable stain
    Will attach itself to you,
So long as water, fire and earth
    The sky and air endure. (56)

"Will this bright and triumphant sword
Which swept away Kalakeya heads[5]
And sliced the tusks of the *diggajas*
Put an end to the lives of women
Slender like sprigs and red-lipped
Rather than shrink with shame? (57)

"If in your anger you kill without compunction
This high-born lady who is also an ascetic
Siva, Vishnu and Brahma will all
Clap their hands and laugh at you,
And call you low-born and unworthy of your race. (58)

"This will become neither earth nor heaven;
It won't be just, not worthy of Lanka;
Nor is it the code of aristocrats.
Born to Pulastya, you have the reputation
Of belonging to a great race.
This is not the way of the strong.
Do you want to whirl in endless shame? (59)

"When you have killed her today with this sword
And then kill Rama and come back to Lanka,
Will you not agonise over Sita's death?
Or are you, diffident of winning against them,
Hope that if she dies they will go away?" (60)

Thereupon Ravana flung away that sword
And said, "I will not come back here
Without my son's head which they took away
As a sign of their success
As well as their own two heads.
Meanwhile", he ordered, "put the body
In a jar of oil". (61)

---

5. Asuras whom Ravana killed when they hid themselves in the sea, before he proceeded to deal with Varuna.

"With this bright and incomparable sword
Which swept away Kalakeya heads
And sliced the tusks of the diggaja
Put an end to the lives of women
Slender like sprigs and red-lipped
Rather than shrink with shame? (57)

"If in your anger you kill without compunction
This high born lady who is also an ascetic
Siva, Vishnu and Brahma will all
Clap their hands and laugh at you,
And call you low-born and unworthy of your race. (58)

"This will become neither earth nor heaven;
It won't be just, not worthy of Lanka.
Nor is it the code of aristocrats.
Born in Pulastya, you have the reputation
Of belonging to a great race.
This is not the way of the strong.
Do you want to whirl in endless shame? (59)

"When you have killed her today with this sword
And then kill Rama and come back to Lanka,
Will you not agonise over Sita's death?
Or are you, diffident of winning against them,
Hope that if she dies they will go away? (60)

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And said, "I will not come back here
Without my son's head which they took away
As a sign of their success
As well as their own two heads.
Meanwhile", he ordered, "put the body
In a jar of oil". (61)

5. Asuras whom Ravana killed when they hid themselves in the sea, before he proceeded to deal with Varuna.

29. HIS ARMY SURVEYED

This they did. Then the messengers
Who had gone in various directions
To gather the Rakshasa's army
Came to Ravana and said,
"There is no place in your city of Lanka
For these men come rank by rank.
What are your orders now?" (1)

Well pleased, the King asked them,
"Where is that gathering now?"
And they, hands on their heads, replied,
"Can anyone say in any one place?
There is no space in this world
For that throng like the seven seas
Gathering at the time of Dissolution". (2)

The dust raised by that army was such
That it reached heaven and made the gods
Whose feet never touch the earth
Look as if they were touching it now.
It covered the soldiers marching to Lanka
So completely that they became invisible
As if cloaked by Dissolution's clouds. (3)

Lightning could not match their swords;
Clouds were not as dark as those men;
Thunder could not rival their drums;
All comparisons are therefore vain.
If we say it walked on the sea,
How can the sea compare then
With its massed men, horses, elephants and chariots? (4)

The armies gathering more and more,
World on world crowded out were displaced;
The moon and the stars, moved out, stood still;
Even the sun, appalled, left his path. (5)

That army went into four-gated Lanka,
Touching the sky and bright like Meru,
As if Yama taking pity on the world
Was herding it into another place,
His own dark kingdom getting ready
To take in this dark and cloudy sea! (6)

Seeing that it would take long
To enter Lanka through its gates
Too narrow for such a crowd,
They just got on to its ramparts
As if the clouds of all the worlds
Had gathered in one solid mass,
And so reached the Rakshasa's city. (7)

The King of the Rakshasas ascended then
The top of an ornate tower
With a view to seeing at a glance
His entire army,
But found that this was a foolish wish
Like trying to take in the seven seas
All together, and decided
To scan them division by devision. (8)

His messengers dilated on his army,
Which was like a sea extending
From one quarter to another,
Section by section, in the way in which
One expounds what is contained
In the Vedas and the Vedantas. (9)

"These are from the teak island
Who came out of the Titans' *yagas*,
Experts in witchcraft, who always
Deluded the gods", they said.
"Their bodies touch the sky. (10)

"These are from the *kusa* grass island---
A blame to Yama and fame to Brahma[1]---
Because of whom the gods of heaven
Have lost their renown, health and residence.
They are Victory in person, Valiant One! (11)

"These are from the silk-cotton island
Who broke into Indra's golden city
And owe their rise to Siva's blessings---
Fiery like a dry forest aflame. (12)

These are from the *anril*[2] island.
They were going to drown the northern Meru,.
The sojourn of the gods in the sea,
But much beseeched gave up their intent. (13)

"These are from the coral island,
Sukra, disregarding the codes
Cohabited in that place
With a blue-eyed Rakshasi
And of the union arose
This lot of ten crore Rakshasas
Who sucked the milk-ocean dry for a while! (14)

---

1. "Yama's blame" because he is unable to kill them; "Brahma's fame" because they are his indestructible creation.

2. The crouncha bird, noted for its love for its mate.

"Lord, these sword-fanged Rakshasas
Are from Gandamadana
With its balmy breeze beyond our sea;
Dark like night and born with the *halahala*
Their numbers defy our reckoning. (15)

"These people are from the Malaya mountain
Also known as the Podiya.
They are stationed in an island in the sea
As Brahma felt they would menace our world
And requested them to make that their home. (16)

"These, Sir, handle the *murkara*,
The three-leaved spear, *musundi* and bow;
Lords of the seven seas crocodile-filled,
Their island is known as Pushkara. (17)

"These are from that big isle, Irali.
Obeying in the past their mother
They immured the god of Death
In the far Chakravala mountain[3]
And released him only on Brahma's request. (18)

"These with arms like those of a demon
Were told by Brahma, 'This world
Has no room to accommodate you.
Go down to the nethermost hell
Under the seven worlds', which they did.
Lord, they are up only for your sake. (19)

"Those are the sons of Nirruti,
Equal to your own kin;
'The halo of the gods' they can be called;
If they do not find blood enough to drink
They will drink up the seven seas;
Dark in colour, a single one
Can lift up the seven mountains. (20)

3. Beyond the seven worlds.

"These gold-ankleted ones were born
When the great Boar rescued Mother Earth
And won her love. Vanquishing Indra
They tied their elephants in earth's corners
Displacing the ones which were there.[4] (21)

"Fierce-eyed, enraged and furious,
These men dwell in the nethermost hell;
And their tread up and down there
Disturbs the thousand-headed Sesha's sleep. (22)

"When Siva danced of yore before Kali
Her anger[5] gave birth to these demons,
Their teeth flashing like their swords.
They have turned up in great heaps. (23)

"Old as sin, their eyes glaring
Like lights lit up in deep caverns,
In their wrath they will kill their mothers
And eat them up: they come from the north. (24)

"Those took their birth when the five-faced Siva
Opened in wrath his middle eyes;
And those when a female Yama
Wanted support to vent her wrath. (25)

"Those in front with tridents in hand
Arose from the blood which flowed like a sea
From Yama's chest when it was kicked by Siva;
And these here in large numbers
Are Rakshasas who took birth
Earlier than *halahala* and nectar. (26)

---

4. What a successful enemy does at the end of a war.

5. At the trick Siva played on her to win against her by suddenly raising one of his legs, which she a woman was too shy to do.

"These arose when the poison
Belched by Vasuki was thrown in the fire
Of the Badavagni; these others
Out of the tufts like fire
Touching the clouds; and the heroes there
Out of the fire which consumed Tripura. (27)

"It is not easy to think or say, Sir,
How many and who these are,
If one were to recount their tricks,
Their great boons and penances,
A thousand yugas will not suffice. (28)

"O Wealthy beyond any god!
Just one of these with one hand
Can settle that monkey and those two
So-called strong ones. Why say more?"
Said those messengers, and Ravana said, (29)

"Tell me what the number of this host
Is on some reckoning"; and they replied,
"If anyone says it is a thousand *vellams*
He will be a madcap. No number in our books
Can do justice to this army",
Saying which they went behind. (30)

"Bring me", said he, "the chiefs of this host
That I may explain things to them;
Give them advice, converse with them,
And honour them appropriately." (31)

Messengers passing down that order
The chiefs of that sea of an army
Came from every direction,
Strewed Ravana's feet with flowers,
Bowed to him, and the tinkle which arose
When their crowns met his anklets
Went up and reached the sky. (32)

When all those approached him,
Bowed to his feet and stood respectfully,
The valiant Ravana said to them,
"I bid you welcome", and asked, heart full,
"Are your wives and sons doing well?" (33)

"You are here with your great strength",
Said they, wishing to know his intent,;
"We have the benefit of our boons.
It shoulddn't be difficult to get what we want.
We have driven away the gods
And do not have any enemies now.
What is impossible for us? (34)

"There is none of those around you
Women or men who are not distressed;
You too seem to be much afflicted,
What is the cause?" they asked him;
And he told them all that had happened
Arising out of his love for Sita. (35)

"Small men with their arrows have laid low
Kumbhakarna, Indrajit and the hosts
Of those of the Rakshasa race?
Well, well for our greatness, Chief!
And their army mere monkeys?"
Said they, and saying so, guffawed. (36)

"You have called and order us
Not to shift the world off Sesha's head,
Or uproot the seven mountains,
Or drink with our palms the wavy seas,
But to wage a war with monkeys
Whos pabulum is flowers and leaves?" (37)

When they said this, clapping their hands
And breaking into a laugh like thunder,
One Vanni, King of the island of Pushkara,
Pushing back those bright-toothed Rakshasas,
Asked, "What is the strength which these men have?" (38)

Maliyavan hearing those words
Came forward and said, "We can tell you
What happened, the strength of those men,
And of the triumphant monkey chiefs.
Listen", and rose to tell them all. (39)

"Viradha the doughty and Maricha were killed;
Khara and Dushana, those big dark mountains,
Trichiras with his dazzling spear
And their army like the sea
Were all disposed of by one bow
In the course of a *naazhikai*. (40)

"Spread out like the sea, you surely know
Vali who like Dissolution's wind
Could cross all the seas in one day?
That strong one's chest, who could pull up
The seven hills, Rama's arrow
Opened wide to drink his life! (41)

"How is it you ask these questions?
Didn't the sea burn where you are?
Or did you fail to notice it?
Didn't the noise when Siva's bow
Was broken enter your big ears? (42)

"Lanka's borders had within them
A thousand *vellams* of fiery warriors.
That host was sent to Yama's house
By the shafts discharged by two men,
Pious creatures with a bow each! (43)

"The victorious Kumbhakarna,
Your King's sons, Prahasta and others,
Along with Indrajit are dead.
Today, only we two are alive! (44)

"There is an army division known as 'the main'
Consisting of three hundred *vellams*
Of what constitutes an army.
Today is the day appointed for it,
And you happen to have come today.
It is good that you should be told
So that you may do a good job
With the army you will fight. (45)

"A monkey came and set fire to Lanka,
Making the Rakshasis lament,
Ground the angry Akshaya under its feet,
Fought with and killed a sea of an army,
Gave its message, and recrossed the real sea! (46)

"Did you see the road those monkeys made
With mountains across the sea
That they may wage a war here?
They have seventy *vellam* soldiers;
And one of them brought a drug in an instant
Jumping across Mount Meru. (47)

"The reason why this war arose
Is because of Sita,
An ascetic of unique chastity.
Fate has brought all this about.
Whether these bowmen win or you,
I have said my say, an old man's words!"
Said he in conclusion. (48)

Vanni looked at the King and asked,
"How is it that while all these died
You never bothered to fight?"
And Ravana replied, "I thought
It would be beneath me
And so held back through a sense of shame",
In that case Vanni said,
"It is our duty to fight". (49)

"What this old Lord has said---
That you should surrender Sita
And make peace with those men
Is wise counsel followed earlier,
To do so now will be humiliating,
After losing our beloved Indrajit. (50)

"Even if we give up the lady
We cannot get back those heroes
Who so willingly died in the war.
All we will get will be infamy.
To do anything except attack the foe
And kill him with all his clan
Is not possible, Our duty is to fight." (51)

Saying which the Rakshasas rose.
"Stay here", they said, "we will go and drink
The blood coursing their frail bodies
And come back victorious.
If we fight shy of fighting
We will prove ourselves sprung
Of an unworthy clan", they said
And took their departure. (52)

30. THE RESERVE FORCE DESTROYED

Ravana who had in the past
Cut off with his sword those elephants the Titans,
Said, "I will go one way
And destroy the huge monkey horde.
All of you together can go
And take the lives of those two men." (1)

When they heard that, the army chiefs
Got into their chariots
And seeing that sea of the opposing force
Said, "We have nothing to do
But send the reserve force quickly
As commanded by Ravana." (2)

He had wiped out the fame of the gods
And, now commanded a huge army.
But was eager himself to fight
And rose and ascended his chariot
To the terror of the worlds and the sages
To attack a part of Rama's army. (3)

Announcers on elephants proclaimed,
With their drums "Let the army arise!"
And the great host gathered together
And covered the earth right up to the sky. (4)

Our globe contains the seas,
And the seas contain many mountains and lives.
So Lanka contained those Rakshasas
As Vishnu, when he measured the world,
Contained, what wonder? all space. (5)

Those Rakshasas who had swallowed
Dharma, and drunk up pity,
Wore their wickedness as a jewel
And were bridegrooms wedded to sin.
Their hearts were as black as their skin
And as fiery red as their hair,
And their ruthlessness was such
As to attract the envy of Death. (6)

Their long hands pushed back the sea
As they swallowed its fishes and sharks.
Those cruel and strutting fools
Wore lightnings in each of their ears[1]
And clothed themselves with clouds. (7)

Their anklets, pythons and clouds
Set with mountains for gems,
They strode with the gait of elephants
But were swift like Garuda or the wind. (8)

If they did not get their food in time
They would thrust huge elephants into their mouths;
If they did not get water to drink
They would seize and squeeze clouds into their mouths. (9)

They would test the sharpness of their spears
By plunging them into mountains;
They scratched their itches with the moon;
Practised their clubs against hills;
And had a voice like thunder. (10)

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1. There was no knowing how many heads, and therefore ears, each of them had!

Whether they handled the trident,
Flung the bright hatchet, held the flaming sword,
Or used the fierce bow, lance, club or discus
They were not less than Yama, Vishnu, Siva
or Skanda. (11)

One of them could win a world;
Two could win all seven worlds;
If they whirled, the worlds would whirl with them;
If they walked straight, seas would follow them! (12)

There were as many elephants
As clouds in the worlds Brahma created;
Jingling chariots as many as the elephants;
As many horses as there were chariots;
And as many men as horses. (13)

"Were one to examine those elephants,
Those chariots and horses one would find
All those bodies with their saddles
Covered by jewels and gems,
And find no mark or sign
Uncovered by such ornaments. (14)

The Coral-coloured dust which arose
By this huge army shouting and marching
Reddened the dark clouds in the sky;
While the must which flowed from the elephants
Made the sea-water taste insipid. (15)

Lanka's gates out of which emerged
This great army resembled the mouth
Of one who in the past had swallowed
Mountains, seas and all other things,
The gods and the worlds beyond,
In order to preserve them
And later to spit them out. (16)

Even Sesha was staggered,
His broad hood unable to bear
Those elephants, chariots, horses and men;
The monkeys having no place to stand on
Ran terrified like the gods
At the sight of the churned-up venom
And sought refuge in the north. (17)

The seven seas within the Chakravala mountain
Would soon prove the hunting ground,
With the Rakshasas for the animals hunted;
Yama, Brahma and their own past
Would be the huntsmen;
And the fortressed Lanka the stall
Where they would be hunted. (18)

What was that noise which arose
Which seemed to shatter the globe,
Hot, bothered and perspiring
Because of the crowd running over it?
The shouts of the men, the rattle of the chariots,
The trumpetings of the elephants,
The neighs of the horses, or the varied sounds
Of the musical instruments? (19)

That sea of the Rakshasa army
Had weapons for its fish;
Elephants for its crocodiles;
Horses for its waves;
Drums and chariots for its roar;
And the fiery eyes of its men
For its vengeful sharks! (20)

Lanka on the top of the hill
Would have sunk in the mire
Caused on its grassy ground
By the tread of the Rakshasas
And the must shed by its elephants
But for the fact that many of its men
Preferred to move about in the air! (21)

The gods looked at the earth; the Rakshasa sea;
The sky above; all the directions;
And saw nowhere an empty space;
Only a heap of flags---
And they sweated and trembled. (22)

"Are all the forms in the world
Only Rakshasa forms bearing arms?
Or have the seven seas got together
And created these many forms?" they wondered. (23)

Trembling they went to Siva and said,
"Lord, we are shrunk and and have nowhere to hide.
These are cannibals. Who knows their past?
Our power is ended," and tried to run away. (24)

"Even if a thousand Ramas come,
And fight one of them for twentyfour years---
What then? We can help him
Only if we have a place to stand in.
How can we engage this army
Without first recovering our life?". (25)

The sapphire-necked Lord replied
To these supplicating him,
"Don't be afraid, that great hero
Will kill them all in one feel swoop!
It is fate which has brought them all together
So that their race may be ended!" (26)

Like rats running for their lives
When they see snakes coming out of a hole
Saying, "Ended is our might",
That other sea of a monkey army
Took to its heels all atremble,
And not even looking at the two heroes. (27)

Some monkeys went on the bank;
Some looked for rafts to cross the sea;
Some thought of swimming; some plunged with
their friends;
Some unseen climbed up the trees;
And many sought refuge in caves. (28)

"This great bridge which we made
Has given us life; let us break it up
So that they may not pursue us,"
Said some; while others said,
"They will pursue us even to the sky."
"They are spread in all directions
Greated," they said in fear. (29)

Sugriva, Hanuman and Angada
Did not desert but stood firm;
All the others fled away,
Crossing even the sea, while Rama looked. (30)

"Where has this dreadful horde come ftom?
Tell me"? said Rama, and Vibhishana
The strong and wise replied, "Sir,
The sinners went in all directions
And to the seven great islands
To gather this vast Rakshasa sea. (31)

"Rising from the seven worlds below
They are like the sea of Dissolution;
This before us is his reserve force---
He has no other after this. (32)

"All those bearing the name of Rakshasa
Have gathered together and come here now
Impelled by their evil fate.
I have a feeling they will die today.
Their evil past inspires them,"
Said he bowing to Rama's feet. (33)

Rama heard, both smiling and furious.
"I will show them," said he, "you will see in an instant.
Remove the fear of these fleeing monkeys
And bring them back," and Angada hurried. (34)

He went, reached them and said,
"You who are running helter skelter,
Listen to me first, and then run."
"We won't," said that monkey clan,
But the great leaders were persuaded. (35)

Returning, on the north shore of the sea,
He talked to them gathered on a hill:
"Why are you running away?"
And they said, "Dear Lord, we suppose
You haven't seen these people?
What good is it that we should die?"
Loth to continue the fight. (36)

"Have you forgotten how a single Indrajit
Fought in the days when he was alive?
These are in no way less than he.
What can two bowmen do against them? (37)

"All the gods from Siva down
The pure one who gives boons to the world
Unable to stand have hidden themselves.
Can mere men now helped by monkeys
Fight against these Rakshasas? (38)

"Siva, Vishnu, Brahma and Indra
Fighting for a thousand crore aeons
Had to flee. If they can indeed
Kill that Ravana with their combined strength
That will indeed be very good. (39)

"O dear! Will these seventy *vellams*
Be enough to quench this one man's hunger?
Are small creatures like us stronger
Than the gods? If the world's Greater
Tries to count the numbers against us,
And takes all the days will even he
Be able to do that job? (40)

"Their King has ten heads and twenty arms.
That was enough to depress us.
And now one has come here
With a thousand heads and two thousand hands;
And the number of the enemies
Outnumbers the sea's sands. (41)

"There was that Kumbhakarna;
We could not even lift his arrow.
You know what he did.
Is anyone cleverer than the gods?
Dear boy, you don't know your weakness
And have come forward here! (42)

"Hanuman's strength and Sugriva's,
And the strength of the bows of those two men
May not suffice to save even them.
There are fruits and vegetables to eat;
Caves in which to hids ourselves.
What matters whether this world is ruled
By men or by Rakshasas? (43)

"One must live to achieve fame;
If we live our kin can live.
Lord you should ask us to go away,
Not go and die. That won't be right." (44)

Angada looked at Jambavan and said,
"Wise one, the equal of Hanuman
Who learnt his grammar from the sun himself,
Did you not comfort us once
Saying that Rama is none other
Than the spotless one, serpent-bedded? (45)

"Instead of easing with wise words
These monkeys and clearing their muddle,
Are you too seized with fear now?
If all one wants is to save one's life
What about fame? Why have learning?
Even if a leader should die
Will his valour become less? (46)

"We are afraid. We incur blame.
But when it is time, can we escape death?
Is not forsaking Rama now
To drink poison thinking it is nectar?
Is it not better to give up our life
Rather than those who have sought our help? (47)

"Have you forgotten how Vali
Who churned the ocean which could not be churned
By the Titans and the gods even with Vishnu's help
Was laid low with a single shaft?
Have you, high-born, forgotten too
What happened to the sea with its fish? (48)

"However many the Rakshasas be,
Where there is no Dharma
Have you ever seen sin
Triumphing over virtue?
It is not right that like a madcap
You should join these and run",
Said he in conclusion,
To which the other replied: (49)

Abashed and feeling miserable,
"Doughty hero! Can even Siva
Face these Rakshasas who have come here?
If not, how can we blame
These crook-back monkeys feeding on flowers? (50)

"In the days when the gods and the Rakshasas fought
Was there anyone I did not see?
But is there any in the three worlds now
As dreadful as these in girth and strength?
Will even Death dare to face them? (51)

"I have seen Mali and Maliyavan;
Kalanemi and Hiranya;
The dreadful halahala, Madhu and Kaitabha
Perturbing the ocean.
Did any of them have these people's might? (52)

"Above this might are the boons they have obtained;
Adepts in witchcraft, they are more numerous
Than the sands of the sea; more cruel than Kali[2];
Learned in the use of weapons.
When we see how even the gods are afraid,
What can we do except shrink before them? (53)

2. The presiding spirit of the fourth and worst yuga.

"Even so, don't have any doubts.
It is not right to flee from a fight
Even to avoid death. Such conduct
Brings disgrace here and hell hereafter.
But there is one more thing to be say.
How can we now face that raincloud Rama?" (54)

When the Bear King said this
The grandson of him who rode his elephant
Like a dark cloud a white mountain
And sheared off with his thunderbolt
The wings of the hills made reply: (54a)

"To win and lose, attack and resist
Is all from of old in the day's work
For a warrior. So let that be.
I have one more thing to say
Which please hear and consider well. (55)

"Please don't fear anything, Sir.
All of us together can't do a thing.
If Rama himself fights and kills
Victory will be ours. Otherwise
We will die with him. To run away
Will never bring us fame," he said. (56)

"Why be surprised", Jambavan asked,
"About the army standing aside?
We ourselves ran away
And are returning with infamy.
Let all of us now return;" and the chiefs
Returned with Angada. And Rama looking
At the fierce enemy told his brother: (57)

"You know, my dear, that when I
Take my bow in my hand
Whoever it be--- whether Rakshasas or Asuraas---
They are just cotton in a fire.
I have never found any opposition. (58)

"It is the nature of monkeys to panic
When they see no protector around
And to flee for shelter to their own place;
While I attack these Rakshasas
And behead them all completely,
You please ensure that these monkeys
Are not approached by those that would bother them. (59)

"If that crafty sinner sends
His army here and himself kills
Those who are there, which bowman
Can stop him unless you yourself?
My heart burns at what he might do. (60)

"Go quickly", said the hero, "with Hanuman and Sugriva
To guard the army. If you hesitate
Because I will be lonely here
We will lose the war," to which the younger replied, (61)

"That, Sir, is the right thing.
Considering the nature of the army,
What is the help we can give you
By merely being near you?
We too like the gods should rather
Hold our heads in our hands
And just admire your bowmanship". (62)

When he said this, and started to leave,
"My father", said Hanuman, "if you will
Not despise me as a mere monkey
But get on my shoulders that will be well.
Or else, dog that I am,
I will just stand behind you
And not fail you as a slave." (63)

"What is it that you cannot do?
When Ravana engages in fight
With Lakshmana the bowman hero,
If you are not there to help him
Will a great victory be possible?
Besides, won't the army be scattered? (64)

"On that day when Indrájit,
The lovely-tufted waged his war,
With whom did I send Lakshmana?
Wasn't his victory because of you?
Hero of heroes, even now
With you beside him, he is sure to win. (65)

"You go and guard the army,
And that elephant who came with me
Leaving that beautiful city behind,
As well as your king, and thereby
Let heaven, the earth and the Vedas
Flourish", he said; and then that other
Said not a word and followed Lakshmana. (66)

"You too, Vibhishana, if you do not
Go with your brother and tell him
All you know of those cruel men's magic
And stand supporting the army,
Disaster may ensue", he said,
And he heard and obeyed him. (67)

Sugriva too followed him
Always doing what Rama ordered.
"That is the right thing", they all said,
Guarding that army spread like the sea.
And now we will tell what the hero did. (68)

That ocean of mercy bowed to his bow,
Took it in hand and strung it;
And although his chest was strong like Meru
Covered it with a dazzling mail;
And fitted his back with a quiver
Of arrows inexhaustible like the Vedas. (69)

The front line of the enemy army
Extending a hundred yojanas
Surrounded Rama on all sides;
The dust raised by their weapons and
Reached the gods and made them shiver.
The upper air seemed to be full of bubbles. (70)

"Compassionate One! our armour!"
Prayed all the gods to him,
"Sea-hued! the abode of Dharma!
Who but you can face this host
Without a thought of retreating?
Bring our hopes to fruition". (71)

All those devoted to virtue,
The sages and the others couldn't bear to think
Of Rama standing alone and that army
In its hugeness. Their eyes watering,
Hearts choked and panting, they gave their blessings
Saying, "Let all the sinners lose
And the victory be Rama's!" (72)

Besides these, many good ones in heaven
Wished, "Let the great bowman win!
And the treacherous wizards die!
Let evil on earth cease today!"
And the Rakshasas with their cruel weapons,
Fighting on earth, said as follows: (72a)

"His army scattered on seeing ours,
Yet he is undaunted, and seems ready
To shoot his arrows, standing steadfast!
Such calmness is greather than winning.
Maliyavan could'nt have spoken amiss. (73)

"Even the one who burnt Tripura
Had a chariot and was surrounded by the gods.
Vishnu who uprooted us once
Came on his bird with heavenly beings.
This one coming on his feet
Comes forward boldly and all alone! (74)

"Here is a man who invites us
With our chariots, horses and elephants,
Lions, and *yalis* and warriors
With bodies like the mountain Meru,
'Come, come!' How will he be able
To escape us with his life?" (75)

Saying this, they surrounded Rama
Like a herd of elephants circling a lion,
Who welcomed them with a "This is good",
And twanged his bow so that the worlds,
The seven above and the seven below,
Could hear that twang from the bow
Of that Lord of the Vedas. (76)

The elephants' must and minds dried up;
The mouths of the fighting men dried up;
The horses lost their speed; the warriors
Spread out like the sky above
Felt their energy draining away.
What need to speak of his victory? (77)

The lions, the devils and the horses
Drawing the chariots, driven mad,
Broke down the chariots, wheels and all.
The elephants attacked their riders and their goads
And tore them into pieces.
A dreadful situation arose there. (78)

"These omens are bad for this army".
Said the gods leaping with joy;
And right then to the grief of the Rakshasas
Came a rain of lightning arrows. (79)

On *yalis*, men, elephants, horses,
Devils, chieftains and the chieftains' chariots,
On their weapons and their bows
Rama broadcast his arrows
And the dust from the earth rose up and up! (80)

Elephants fell down like mountains;
Horses fell down like the Rakshasas' heads;
Flagstaffs fell down like bows cut up;
The forest of the Rakshasas fangs
Fell down like the moon's beams! (81)

With a strong wind blowing on all the sides
Rama's shafts fell like rain in summer
Killing elephants, horses, chariots and men
And the eye couldn't take in the blood
which flowed. (82)

The rain of arrows shaming the sky,
All the eyes, hands, bows, spears,
Swords, mouths, legs, shoulders
Directed against Rama seemed to stand still---
None of them seemed to have hurt him. (83)

The arrow fixed, the bow would fall;
The sword taken up, the shoulder would fall;
Legs ready to run would be cut off.
What in their wrath could the warriors do? (84)

Since Rama attacked each target chosen
With arrow after arrow, each one of which
Divided into a hundred shafts,
What could those horses do sent forward
By those boon-proud Rakshasas
But collapse on the ground and die---
Their hooves split, eyes gouged out,
Teeth broken, chests pierced? (85)

If those poor things called chariots
Tried to crawl forward
They could not move because of the heaps
Of corpses in front of them.
If they tried to sidle, the thousands of arrows
Shattered each of them into a hundred pieces,
And what was left for their men to do
Except own defeat and die? (86)

The fiery-eyed and butting elephants
Hit by the arrows collapsed
As if when they came they were already dead!
A question seemed to go the rounds,
"Even if the warriors from all eight directions
Should come attacking, will they escape?" (87)

Since a single arrow of the lotus-eyed
Could lay low a hundred crores,
Even Brahma taking toll of the dead
Was dizzied in his arithmetic.
Yama too mopping up the souls
Had to slow down in his task. (88)

A heap of arrows flying fast, belching fire
Set aflame a heap of flags on chariots and elephants
As if a heap of thunderbolts
Had set fire to a forest
And knocked down by the crore
A heap of Rakshasa crowns. (89)

The shafts and swords of the Rakshasas
Broken and sent to the sea
Heated the water there, and the sea
Got dry, the fish died, and merged with the mud. (90)

The feathered arrows the bowman shot
Sped like lightning as when Tripura was burnt
And set the enemies and their chariots afire
As the sea erstwhile, their heads falling shattered. (91)

The hands of the heroes mounted on elephants
    Holding swords and arrows,
Severed, fell on the floor and throbbed
    Like darting serpents;
Their red heads with puckered mouths
    Rolled on the ground in heaps
Like the peaks of mountains
    Shattered by lightning! (92)

When the ruler of the waters and the earth,
The wise one with his sword "naanthaka,"[3]
The hero, sent his swift shafts,
The fearful *yalis*, lions, demons,
Wild dogs and the charioteers
All lost their lives, and the chariots---
A hundred crore--- were accounted for. (93)

In that dusty battlefield
  Made into a mire
By the blood which flowed from the wounded
  Like rain at Dissolution
The wheeled chariots sank
  As well as the foot-soldiers;
The visored elephants sank with their riders;
  And the horses were sucked in. (94)

The severed heads going up
Made the gods in heaven shift
Here and there to avoid them;
While those on earth being afraid
That they would prove a rain of stones
Were full of pity for themselves! (95)

Heads with staring eyes sent up
By the series of Rama's arrows
Shot off like the rain unceasing
At the time of Dissolution,
Fele precipitous on the earth
Like so many rainclouds off the sky
Or like the heavenly chariots
Caught up in a whirlwind! (96)

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3. The name of Vishnu's sword.

Some of the heroes invoked divine *astras*;
Some fixed their arrows in bows and shot them;
Some threw missiles; some seized hills,
Whirled them in their hands and hurled them,
Some rushed forward, saying, "We will catch him";
Some unable to get any weapons
Just rated, abused and threatened;
Some came forward and some strayed away. (97)

Like clouds in the rainy season
  Circling round the sun,
Of the innumerable Rakshasas
  Swift on their feet,
Many shouted, many attacked;
  Many hurled their weapons
In handful after handful;
  Many flung their three-leaved spears;
Many got behind; many glared
  With their fiery eyes;
And many plucked up mountains
  To hurl as missiles. (98)

All the weapons which were hurled or shot,
  Lifted or caught were destroyed
By the fierce arrows which flew;
  The chariots and the animals
With their manes were destroyed.
  Heads rolled, and the high-shouldered one
Emerged like the sun out of dark clouds. (99)

The native of that lovely land
Where farmers cutting the paddy plants
Cut with them lotuses too,
Sent his shafts and cut down
The armours of those men of might;
He cut their bodies, cut their bows,
Cut their heads, cut their strength,
Cut their valour, cut the stones
They were hurling more and more,
Cut the trees and the hands which hurled them---
Who can withstand such a one? (100)

All the gods told each other
How those elephants had lost
Their legs, tails, trunks, necks,
Howdahs and tusks--- but did not say
How they, wide as the sea, lost
Their wish to win, their must like rain,
Their strength and their natural rage. (101)

The lances hurled at him were a hundred crore;
The unfeathered arrows high-flying a hundred crore;
The mountainous murderous elephants a hundred crore;
The horse-drawn chariots a bundred crore;
And one man destroyed them all. (102)

An endless number of big bowmen
Who could perturb the seven worlds
Shot a ceaseless rain of arrows
All together at one man.
The arrows of these unfortunates
Were all powdered, and their heads cut off,
Their mountainous bodies rolled on the ground. (103)

Those described as possessing the strength
Of a hundred thousand elephants
Were transformed and lost their mountainous bodies
At the touch of a single shaft of Rama.
And in the six thousand rivers of blood
Which resulted, the elephants
Angry and bemused, lost themselves
And were swept into the sea. (104)

By one fierce shaft well-aimed,
The Rakshasas' axes would fall broken;
Mountains, discuses, strong clubs,
Leaf-shaped spears, elephants' sides,
Horses and rows of chariots. (105)

Death, his messengers and deputy
Who at one go can take all lives
Coming to that field were tired out
Having but two legs each
And so sauntered and even forgot to take
The thousands of souls which were their prey. (106)

The heaps of elephants, chariots and horses
Destroyed, mounted up to the sky;
But when the headless torsos danced
All the people were filled with the terror
That the hills of corpses had come back to life. (107)

The blood from the killed spurting on his body
Made that bowman, the Dark Sun,
Resemble the sun at Dissolution
Which will burn up and destroy all the worlds,
And also the one who bathed in the blood
Of the enemies whom he had destroyed.[3a] (108)

3a. Parasurama who bathed in the blood of the Kshatriyas whom he destroyed because one of them had killed his father.

Though their men were beheaded by Rama's shafts
Which were like fire and thunder,
The Rakshasas, their zeal not lessened,
Swarmed round Rama gleefully
Resembling bees in this respect
While he resembled the honey in the comb. (109)

He covered those who swarmed round him
In an instant with his arrows
Making them resemble the hard, green *kazharkaai;*[4]
He also decided that he would make
Of their elephants and chariots
A soup which would soak in the field. (110)

Many gave up their lives; many ran away;
Many saved their lives; many were distressed;
Many fought with pleasure; many squirmed;
Many rolled on the ground; many went in circles;
Many were burnt; many were scorched;
Many rose, many fell; many shed their entrails;
Many opposing were beheaded. (111)

Like flashes of lightning from dark clouds
The severed bodies of the Rakshasas
Let fall numerous ornaments---
Ear-rings of precious stones,
Epaulettes, *kuzhais*[5], glittering crowns,
Lovely necklaces, mails, anklets, dots. (112)

"He is in front"; "He is at the back";
"Facing the army"; "Inside it";
"On the sides"; "At the head";
"On that hill"; "On this ground";
"In the sky"; "What unique speed?"
Exclaimed the Rakshasas as he sped around. (113)

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4. A berry?
5. A kind of ear-ring.

"I saw him", "I saw him", each of them claimed,
As bow in hand he stalked them like a lion.
He was destroying that sea of an army
But though in their dark midst could not be caught,
Like a man's shadow, near him but unseizable. (114)

Though the enemy army of many *vellams*
Spread itself in the seven seas
And in the seven worlds
Rama was both visible before them
And inside those crafty men hiding themselves.[6] (115)

When the gods could not see him visible outside
They did not realise that he had shifted his ground
And wondered if, thus spreading himself
Out and away, he had forgotten
The cause for which he had come to the world. (116)

As a fierce tempest breaks and lays low
    Both mountains and huge trees,
Rama rained his dreadful arrows
    And cut down the wicked horde
Spreading himself in every direction
    Like Trivikrama of old
Who rose and stretched himself and so
    Measured the universe. (117)

The ocean-bedded jumped as it were
From one mountain to another
Of elephants, chariots and horses,
Yalis, lions and fierce warriors
Which his arrows had heaped up
Leaving no space anywhere. (118)

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6. Like God Almighty, inside and outside all creation.

Killed by the arrows of Rama
Elephants with their sky-high flags and howdahs
Sank in that sea of blood
Like ships sinking in the sea. (119)

Shields lay cut up in hands
Trained for hunting and warfare;
On the evil battlefield
Lay heads wreathed in *tumbai*.[7] (120)

The sharp arrows from Rama's quiver
Like cobras out of their holes
Cut off the enemy's necks
And so their wrath, necklets and garlands! (121)

The heads of the deceitful Rakshasas
Severed, rising up and falling,
Were like balls in a game
Played by the goddess of War. (122)

The severed heads of those thorns in the flesh
Swallowed with their fangs by the elephants
Were like the moon disappearing
In a storm amid the clouds. (123)

The teeth of the warriors
And the tusks of the elephants
Heaped up together made one wonder
If the crescents of many days had fallen
on the earth. (124)

The blood from the Rakshasa corpses
Flowing without cease into the sea
Obliged those in the islands there
To climb up mountains for shelter. (125)

---

7. A flower worn by a warrior when going to a battle.

The heavens were filled by the souls sent up;
The seas were filled with the blood from the wounds;
The earth was filled by the cut-up bodies;
And the eyes of the gods by the bowmanship! (126)

The weapons swept into the sea
By the river of blood which was shed
Cut up the fish there everywhere
So that countless numbers of them died. (127)

"Is this right", asked Vanni, a Rakshasa,
"That one man should cut up this army,
And we unable to do anything
Should simply stand like hills
Biting our empty mouths? (128)

"Before the arrows start falling
If we, all together, fall on him,
He will surely be destroyed.
Why are you all, like dark clouds,
Just standing motionless?
Have you all been bewitched? (129)

"A thousand *vellams* are here
Standing only to be destroyed?
Will you wait for that to happen?
Resolve at once, and leap on him",
Said he eager to help his leader. (130)

That *vellam*, angry and resolute,
Surrounded Rama on every side
And attacked him with various weapons
Like clouds raining on a mountain. (131)

Then Rama discharged a rain of arrows
Cutting down the weapons shot and flung,
Bringing the chariots and elephants down,
And destroying the horses, their riders and the weapons. (132)

The arrows whizzing and making a noise
Produced a lot of bloodshed
Which made the devils dance with joy
Darting flames like the lamp in a lighthouse
So welcome to a sailor! (133)

Clothed with a sea of fat and blood
The goddess of the Earth was delighted
With the red sari she wore,
Bright, with red paste, as if adorned
For an auspicious occasion. (134)

The saying that the seas were seven
Of salt, honey, ghee, bright curds,
Milk, cane-juice and water--
Was rendered wrong by the addition
Of another sea, coral in colour,
The blood produced by one bow! (135)

The shot was one, the shafts a crore
Which issued from that bow
Looking like that day's crescent:
Even so, when will they die? (136)

All those who took up weapons and shouting
Flung them from near, opposed him fiercely,
Or, having left tired, came back now
To assail him like furious tuskers,
Were cut into pieces by Rama's shafts
And lay row by row on the ground. (137)

A thousand fiery arrows strung
Brought down not a thousand foes
But ten thousand--- such was their speed
As well as their aim and end intended.
Swifter than eye or thought were they.
The enemies took up their shafts, it would seem,
Only to die. What else could they do? (138)

The arrows covered the Rakshasa horde's
Front, forehead and sides, and all between
Leaving nowhere any space
Through which even a needle could enter.
They were there to eat up lives;
To reach the limits of space and beyond!
Those here opposing God
Could only die. How could they win? (139)

Rama's arrows were the fire of Dissolution
The Rakshasa horde a dry-tree forest;
The musty elephants were huge mountains.
Shooting his arrows, the hero resembled
A fisherman casting his net
Into the sea of that hostile army
Full of the fish destined to die. (140)

Rama was Dissolution's whirlwind
And the Rakshasas who were fighting him
The mountains which would turn to dust.
He was the sea at the end of time
Which will surge and destroy all living things
In the seven worlds; and the Rakshasas
The things destined to perish then! (141)

Rama, the beginning, middle and end
Of all creation resembled
The ultimate death of Dissolution;
While the Rakshasas were all those things
Moving and unmoving destined to die
Rama was the *halahala* rising
When the noisy sea was churned,
And the Rakshasas the fish in that sea
Struck dead by that venom. (142)

The Rakshasas were like the race of those
Who deceitfully and in devious ways
Acquire wealth and bear false witness
In courts--- while Rama
Was the Dharma which destroys such men.
He was also a poisoned stream
Which those who lick will die at once;
While the Rakshasas resembled the poor
In days of famine destined to die. (143)

A hundred *vellams* of the army dead,
The blood flowing from their wounds
Mixed in the sea, and made it flow
Over high and low in Lanka,
So that the doe-eyed Rakshasis
Didn't know what was in, what out
What was rampart, what was floor
And ran perturbed on tired feet,
Crying aloud in their anguish. (144)

These who went near to fight Rama
Lost their lives and their corpses stretched
Like lengthening mountains and touched the skies;
Blood flowed like the sea in all directions
And rose confronting them;
And the thousand crores of army chiefs
Irresistible assailed him. (145)

They rode on chariots, musty elephants,
Mountain *yalis*, horses, lions
And every kind of vehicle;
Shot oft arrows like clouds and thunder
To fill the field, and followed them. (146)

"Come, fellows, come and be killed;
Yield up your lives and boons",
Said Rama and showered on them
Fearful arrows, deadly like lightning,
And inexhaustible like the sea.
And those fierce Rakshasas
Opposed them all, section by section. (147)

Those mighty Rakshasas joining together
Cut down those arrows angrily,
And raining arrows like a storm
Covered Rama completely,
Raising as it were a bank,
And in their arrogance approached him.
And the gods then went to Siva,
Bowed to his feet and said as follows: (148)

"Each of these army chiefs
Is thrice as strong as Ravana;
Their numbers cannot be counted.
Gathered together they fill the world,
And loud-mouthed will ruin it.
Rama is fighting all alone
And they will wipe out all and win.
Advise us. Flame-hued, as to what we should do (149)

"Before the shafts can reach them
They intercept and break them,
And beset the seven worlds
Like dark clouds lowering.
Only a curse can deal with them.
To conquer them with an army
Will be beyond even Vishnu and you",
Said they frightened and falling down. (150)

"Don't be afraid. However many,
They will be like cotton catching fire
And all of them utterly destroyed.
This has all been told of yore.
Venom may prevail over nectar
And deceitful sin overcome virtue,
But these Rakshasas with their witchcraft
Cannot triumph over Rama (151)

"Except for Vibhishana
Where in this world is a good Rakshasa?
Compassion is the basis of Dharma.
From now on you need not trudge
Seeking caves for shelter.
By noon today that mighty tiger,
Liege lord of the monkey King
Will have destroyed these creatures." (152)

So spoke Siva, and Brahma concurred.
The gods stood up and regained their calm.
And Rama discharging his arrows
All around faster than rain
Killed and heaped up heads
Higher than the seven great mountains. (153)

The Rakshasas who surrounded Rama
Like a rolling sea full of sharks,
Their bodies tall as hills, broken
Died to their great distress.
And their souls were despatched
To the indescribable joys of heaven---
An ancient city where the space
Was not enough to accommodate them! (154)

The legs of the horsemen cut off
Filled the moats of Lanka
And while their heads and their horses
Went rolling on the ground
Their souls went up to heaven
To fondle the heavenly nymphs' breasts! (155)

There was no place which could be approached---
Mountains, sea, forest, desert,
Heaven itself--- where one could not find
Some part of a Rakshasa---
Head, body, blood or soul! (156)

When the battle went on thus
And the wily chiefs were all killed,
That army began to wobble
And the flowers rained by the gods
Covered the place with numerous drops. (157)

Then the Rakshasas chased those running away,
And darting fire from their long eyes,
Shouted, "Idiots, come back, come back",
And sent against Rama speedily
Elephants, lions and horses, (158)

The world was deafened; clouds dropped down;
High mountains were displaced;
The fleeing army like thunder and lightning
Returned to surround Rama like darkness. (159)

And the lovely one enjoying it
Said, "Lovely, lovely", and met them
As if welcoming a familiar guest
With a rain of fire
While the gods shed a rain of flowers. (160)

Flags on all sides reaching the sun,
Enraged horses delighting in battle,
The gem-set chariots beset Rama
As if Meru the golden was advancing. (161)

Kites and eagles carrying away
Bodies in the chariots pierced by the arrows,
The disc of the sun was bedimmed
And the floor of the earth turned to a mire. (162)

By the two hands of Rama the elephant turning,
The seas nearly seemed to turn,
The mountains seemed to turn from their places,
The two flames in the sky turned
And the whole world turned like a potter's wheel. (163)

Then the devils, Yama, Rama's bow and Dharma
Danced with joy; while Siva, Brahma,
And the discus-bearing Lord of the gods
With all the gods and the sages
Executed somersaults. (164)

Among the gods in the three worlds
Who could predict the end of this fight?
The heads of even the Trinity shook
And the Vedas broke out in praise,
"O the First and Origin of Dharma
With a hue like that of the *poovai* flower![8]" (165)

8. Blue - Coloured

With one arrow, the visored elephants,
The horses, the men and the chariots
Falling into the seven seas,
The Rakshasas' feet running away
Got as tired as the hands of the gods
And the Titans when they churned the sea. (166)

The arrows shot by Rama
Left their marks on the elephants,
Chariots, saddled horses and men
As if they were notches made
To render the counting easy,
Quickly and without limit. (167)

"Their army is shrunk, and therefore
They may wish to run and hide",
Thought Rama, and to prevent that
Decided to erect a rampart of arrows. (168)

Those world-conquerors who resembled
Mali, Maliyavan, the mountainous Kaitabha
And Madhu, wearing armours,
Could not cross that rampart of arrows
Which Rama put up, hot and ceaseless. (169)

All those who had not died
Shrank into a small space
Like the seven seas at Dissolution
When the Badavagni consumes them. (170)

"Siva, Vishnu and Indra
With his well-filed thunderbolt
Could not do anything to us.
But this one man can burn up
Our boons, might and living days! (171)

"This huge army of a thousand *vellams*
Of strong men of whom each singly
Can destroy the sea-girt earth
He has with a single bow
Annihilated in an instant! (172)

"Even the unconquered army of the gods
Will die before us in the field
And we triumphant go away.
For crores of us in such an army
To be humbled by a single bow
Makes the lot as a Rakshasa a difficult one! (173)

"Among those hurrahing from heaven,
Brahma, the Bull-rider and the other gods.
We do not see that long-limbed cheat---
This here must be that one. (174)

"He has killed more than a crore of crores,
If not a *padma*, We are one *vellam*
What more is there to think about?
Reflect", they said; and Vanni replied; (175)

"Shall we return to Ravana
Because we are afraid to die?
Or blame ourselves perpetually?
It is better we lose this body of ours,
Avoid rebirth and achieve fame. (176)

"If we now think of going away
We cannot escape this rampart of arrows.
Let us all together make an attack
And lose ourselves", said he determined. (177)

Impelled by fate, these mountainous Rakshasas
Assailed Rama making a·din
Like great rivers which can dislodge mountains
Falling into the sea,
Or grasshoppers falling into a flame. (178)

They showered on that hero
Axe, club, rod, discus, plough and sword,
Post, javelin, pike, spear, lance and hand-lance,
Trident, caltrop and other missiles
As if baiting a tiger in a stock! (179)

The King of kings discharged from his bow
The divine missile known as Gandharva
Which went raging and fiery
As if it were the king of the serpents
Or the monarch of the birds. (180)

Three-eyed, five-faced, fiery-bodied,
Fresh-bathed, towering to the sky,
That missile, a rain of arrows,
Looked like Siva, the burner of Tripura. (181)

Ten crores of Rakshasa kings,
Stalwart heroes were all destroyed
In an instant, we are told,
The reserve force of Ravana
The expert in doing penance. (182)

Then came those from the seven great isles
In the different directions
And the lands below where snakes dwell
Guarding mountains and other things
Bound to Ravana by love and duty. (183)

They could wear the sun and the moon
Circling Meru on their chests;
Their tongues had wales reciting what
Brahma had made them learn
Which had earned them many boons. (184)

"If this man can vanquish even one of us
He will vanquish Ravana in the fight.
That being so, should we all of us
Attack him in one instant,
Or in fairness one by one?" (185)

"All of us, all of us"?, said Vanni,
"Must tackle this tall one, besetting him
If we do not, in our might,
Never, never shall we win"---
And those Rakshasa warriors said,
"The old one is right", and so proceeded. (186)

They roared like the seven seas;
Blew their conches as if to bring down
The sky with its lightning,
Slapped their shoulders, to make one wonder,
"What will happen to the earth and the sky?[9]
Where will the directions go?" (187)

They made a great noise and instantly
Rama twanged his bow and subdued their strength;
And the sound of that twang like that of the conch
Of the world-measurer filled all space. (188)

Many thousand crores well-versed
In the books on warfare;
Capable of leadership;
Famed as bowmen in all the worlds;
And from the upper crust of the Rakshasas; (189)

---

9. The Kazhakam reading.

Conquerors of the worlds, gods and Titan;s
Killers and eaters like Death himself
Of all things that fear life
Went ahead and attacked him. (190)

As if surrounding a musty elephant
In its stable, they discharged
Not one but many kinds of weapons
Making the gods in heaven wilt. (191)

The flame which arose from the weapons they sent
To drive out the enemy mixed with the flame
Issuing from their eyes, and entered
The seven worlds and burnt them. (192)

The noise of the chariots, the chieftains' railings,
The sound of the neclaces and anklets,
The twang of the bowstrings ready for the fight
Mingled with the cloud-like elephants'
trumpetings. (193)

"Each one is like a Ravana;
No world left unconquered by him;
Strong of limb, a veteran",
Thought even Rama, irritated. (194)

The discuses and arrows they sent
Burning like Dissolution's fire
He countered with a shower of arrows
Unceasing like the ultimate rain! (195)

The fiery arrows which he shot
Piercing their broad chests
Brought them down with their chariots
Like the red sun with its halo. (196)

The deadly arrows flying bright,
Luminous like Death's teeth
Brought down the Rakshasas' hands with their bows
Dark clouds coming down with lightning. (197)

Hands severed with arrows in them
And floating in a sea of blood
Were like branches of a tree
Cut down with the serpents clinging to them. (198)

Elephants with their visors of gold
Pushed by the blood-stream into the sea
Resembled clouds with lightning
Entering the waters which gird the world. (199)

The glittering sword in the right hand
Of a Rakshasa fallen in the river of blood
Resembled as it rose a shark,[10]
And a horse so fallen resembled a shrimp. (200)

Shields fallen into the river of blood
From hands severed by shining arrows
Swept into the sea resembled
As many turtles as there were shields. (201)

Flags falling into the river of blood
With the staffs to which they were tied
Resembled the sails of boats
Swept with their masts into the sea
By a fierce breeze from the north. (202)

Arrows sticking to severed hands
Floating in the river of blood
Made them look like lotus-stalks
And also like sharks quivering. (203)

---

10. Which has at its bottom a projection like a sword.

The bright wheels of chariots
Separated and fallen in the river of blood
Which was filled with shafts, had the look
Of a full moon setting in the ocean. (204)

Since his aim was to destroy directly
All the sinful Rakshasas
Who had been so far successful,
Each time Rama bent his bow
The heads which fell exceeded a crore. (205)

The arrows which pierced the armours
Encasing the enemies' chests
Eager to drink their blood
Were like streaked bees swarming round honey. (206)

In that field of a hundred *yojanas*
Where the vultures went circling,
One man in the course of three hours
Completed his task of killing and heaping up! (207)

Standing against those who stood,
Pursuing those fleeing away,
He killed all so that they said,
"This must be the one who killed
In front of his son that son's father".[11] (208)

"He's here"; they would say, "he is here, he is here"?
Perturbed, and unable to get him;
And in their wrath shoot here and there,
Miss him and get killed themselves. (209)

They couldn't realise that he was but one;
Said, "This is not night but day";[12]
And also, "This can be no treachery"---
"Rama is indeed like the sands of the sea!" (210)

11. Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipu in front of Prahlada.
12. Because of the brilliance or Rama's arrows.

Each one in that army was like a mountain;
The army itself was a thousand *vellam;*
They killed by mistake one another
Could any of them kill him?[13] (211)

"He is on the chariot", "He is on the horse";
"He is on the red-eyed cloud-elephant;
"He is on the sea"; "He is on the earth";
"He is in the sky"--- so they said. (212)

That son of the King made them think,
Approaching, circling, straying, turning,
Back and sideways, in their very bodies---
And those big cheats[14] were bewildered. (213)

Musty elephants and horses were scattered;
Chariots like snowy mountains were ruined;
The quarters were split; the muddied seas rose;
Tears streamed from the eyes of the maidens
Wedded to the tigerish Rakshasas
Every time that the bells attached
To Rama's bow went ting-a-ling-a-ling! (214)

When a thousand elephants, ten thousand chariots,
A crore of horses and a thousand war-chiefs
Were destroyed, one torsoe would dance;
When a forest of a thousand such torsos
Danced, clanged a bell in his bow---
O wasn't it a dainty dish
When that bell went clanging for three hours? (215)

---

13. Both Gopalakrishnamachariar and Swaminatha Aiyar render this line, "Did Rama kill any of them?" which seems to me an absurd question. He killed all of them!

14. Adopting the Swaminatha Aiyar reading.

By the speed with which Rama and his bow
Dealt with those who attacked them,
That unique lion reduced the chariots
Of those who died fighting, and those who still fought
To the level of his own, namely the earth! (216)

Though that destructive bow was but one
And the quiver of arrows also one,
The rain of arrows which kept falling
Exceeded the drops from a ceaseless shower.
What a thousand hands could do
His two hands did; the thousand-handed
Having chosen to become a man. (217)

It was a lie that this was a man
Who had but a single face.
The truth of this we have realised.
How could one face know and provide for
The deeds of a thousand *vellam* army?
Nor a thousand but infinite his faces! (218)

Siva and Brahma thought that they
Would count the arrows shot by Rama
But gave up, unable to do so.
Shoulders surging with joy, they said,
"How is it possible to count them?" (219)

"The Rakshasa army is a thousand *vellam*"
Said the other denizens of heaven.
"Even if for calculation
We assign on.. shaft for each warrior
It will not do, because each of them
Has been cut into a hundred pieces.
How is it possible for Rama
To have shown his favour so liberally?" (220)

The sages wondered thereupon,
"Which expert can get the sum
Of the arrows that must have quelled
So many parasols, so many flags,
So many weapons and arrows,
So many elephants, chariots, horses
Down to the foot soldiers?" (221)

The way those arrows pursued the Rakshasas
Into their throats, mouths, skulls,
Stirring and shaking them up
Was as if Brahma making creatures
Filling the worlds with various foetuses
Stirred and shook them to give each a shape. (222)

When ten crore warriors with their weapons
Shouted, ran and lost their lives,
The others said, "Why should we die
Standing helpless? Let us use
The divine *astras* against him!"
And all together swarmed around him. (223)

From Vishnu's missile to Brahma's
They despatched them all together;
The assembly of the gods trembled;
The worlds turned upside down:
And Rama looking and smiling
Countered each missile with each. (224)

If he should himself use those missiles,
Thought that liberal-minded one,
None could resist them, and the world
Would be destroyed as at Dissolution;
And using countless crores of arrows
Shot their heads down, as thunder
Lays flat the peaks of mountains. (225)

Those thousand *vellams* fell down and died;
The great Earth lightened of her burden
Rose high from the noisy sea
And surging up a crore of *yojanas*
Regained her wonted place! (226)

"What we wanted has been done",
  Felt the gods, rid of sorrow;
"I can wear my victory chaplet",
  Said Indra rejoicing;
The Vedas which no man created
  Recovered life and shot up;
And Sesha could now raise his heads
  Undistressed and breathing free. (227)

All those who had mouths to bless with
Blessed him who had given away
To his brother, at his mother's command,
The wealth which was by right his;
And going into the bamboo forest,
Thanks to the gods' penances,
Did the task of a warrior
And wiped the griefs of all. (228)

Killing all those Rakshasas
  Red-eyed, as if with fire,
He stood there, worshipped by the gods.
  With flowers in their hand,
At that time he resembled
  The blue-necked one surrounded
By devils, jackals and corpses
  On a cremation ground. (229)

That battlefield stood for the world
  And the Rakshasas slain for life,
And he the sole survivor there
  For God at Dissolution
When, having swallowed the creation,
  He stands there by himself
Before regurgitating it
  To start the cycle again! (230)

The gods rid of their grief
Showering flowers and sandal paste
So that the strain and sadness
Of that fight could be assuaged,
The gracious one who had waged it
Left that field sword-dominated
And went looking for his brother
Who was fighting with Ravana. (231)

Having narrated the events here
We will now recount in full
The doings of the army there
Of the wicked Ravana
And the younger hero's spotless deeds. (232)

That battlefield stood for the world
  And the Rakshasas slain for life,
And he the sole survivor there
  For God at Dissolution
When, having swallowed the creation,
  He stands there by himself
Before regurgitating it
  To start the cycle again! (230)

The gods rid of their grief
Showering flowers and sandal paste
So that the strain and sadness
Of that fight could be assuaged,
The gracious one, who had waged it
Left that field sword-dominated
And went looking for his brother
Who was fighting with Ravana. (231)

Having narrated the events thus
We will now recount in full
The doings of the army chief
  Of the wicked Ravana
And the younger hero's matchless deeds. (232)

31. A SPEAR FLUNG AND BORNE

The army of monkeys returned, saying,
'None of the great chiefs have left;
If we leave loving our lives
Who is there to stop us?
But it will not do to incur blame
If we want a place in heaven". (1)

In a chariot with a thousand wheels
With a thousand horses with clipped manes
And dazzling like the sun's abode,
Came Ravana with a bow in hand
Which had won against the gods,
And with quivers of fearful arrows
Which seemed to proclaim his triumph. (2)

Sending a thousand *vellam* Rakshasas
To deal swiftly with the two men
Ravana decided to take on the monkeys
And saw them from his chariot cowering in terror. (2a)

A hundred crore of chariots,
Two hundred crores of fast horses,
Ten crores of elephants---
Their must streaming like a river---
And twice that number of foot-soldiers
Fierce like lions went with him---
Himself an angry and maned lion! (3)

Drums, conches and kettledrums
As if begotten by thunder
Seemed to proclaim in a voice
Which reached the seven worlds and seven,
"Come to the battlefield, all ye heroes
Who can kill your enemies
From the three worlds and beyond!" (4)

The monkey heroes then beheld
That Rakshasa of Rakshasas,
The evil fate of the befooled gods,
A fire to burn the very thoughts of a toe
And the sea of his army beyond count. (5)

They saw him with his army
And divided themselves into sections,
Deciding that it would be better
To die for the sake of Rama,
And taking huge rocks in their hands
Slapped their shoulders and raised a noise
Enough to frighten Death himself
And displace the numerous worlds. (6)

The Rakshasa force and the monkey sea
Prepared to lay down its dear life
Met each other, and interlocked.
Fire rose in an instant, and blood
Like molten copper flowed into the sea. (7)

The heads which were cut off rose to the sky
And made it shine like the sun;
And the blood dropping from the clouds
Made the whole world a battlefield. (8)

When Lakshmana took up his arrows
In that sea of the Rakshasa army,
The male bees came for the elephants' must,
Fluttered their wings and flew away.
And the elephants themselves dropping their visors,
Tired as the arrows hit them,
Fell, their bodies caught in a swirl,
And floated with their intestines.[1] (9)

Women who saw their dead husbands' smile
Recalled their former love-plays
And lamenting their loss aloud,
Anklets tinkling, died and joined them.[2] (10)

Looking at the heaped-up corpses
Caused by this war, as if the seven
And seven worlds were being destroyed
At the time of Dissolution,
Ravana said, "My never-lowered army
Will lose its pride and pomp now!" (11)

Only trees and rocks coped
With the bows, swords, axes, tridents,
Files, spears and other weapons
And made the enemy heads also
Drop like stones, and ruined that army;
While Lakshmana at another place
Was using his strength and expertise. (12)

As Lakshmana and Hanuman
Like a needle and its thread went through,
The fire-eyed elephants, the horses,
And the chariots cut to pieces
Swept by the rivers of blood
Found their way into the sea. (13)

---

1. Elaborate exercise in yamaka.
2. Exercise in Yamaka

That hero went round like Death
Decimating the Rakshasa horde
Bow in hand, as if that
Was one of the weapons of Yama;
Hanuman's nails and teeth got sharper
As he ravaged like a lion or thunder
But the Rakshasa army lost
In numbers and in sharpness. (14)

Seeing what happened, Ravana thought,
"If I spend my time any more like this
Death will destroy my great army
And go. I will plunge into this war
And bring back victory in an instant". (15)

He discharged again and again
Burning brands swift as the wind,
Capable of replacing thunder,
Of splitting mountains, piercing the globe,
Measuring the quarters, and functioning
Like the myrmidons of peremptory Death. (16)

When Ravana entered the field like a lion
Why say the monkeys resembled dogs?
They were rather like flowers in the open
Attacked by a fierce whirlwind.[3] (17)

Lakshmana stopped the fleeing army
With a "Monkeys, don't fear, don't tear!"
And mounting on Hanuman, his chariot,
Confronted the wrathful Ravana. (18)

---

3. Adopting Swaminatha Aiyar's interpretation of *kaali* as wind (as in Telugu), not as the fierce Durga in the middle of the night (Gopalakrishnamachariar).

Confronted thus Ravana discharged
More than a billion fiery arrows,
Which Lakshmana scattered swiftly
With his own shafts, like cotton in a breeze. (19)

On that opponent's shoulders and chest
Ravana sent piercing arrows;
And when ten of those penetrated
Lakshmana, perturbed and angry,
Made that mighty Rakshasa
Wince with the arrows he shot. (20)

The shafts he sent quickly were irresistible,
And the Rakshasa breaking them thought to himself.
"It is not easy to vanquish this one
With arrows.[4] Apart from them
What shall I do at this stage? (21)

"If I send any of the god-named *astras*
He will be able to meet and bear them.
He can win against all, test even Death;
Can like his brother burn all the worlds;
Will not be defeated by any. (22)

"There is an astra called the Mohana
Invented of old by the first of gods;
Bodiless, which can defeat even Siva;
I will send that *astra,* unique and mantric
And leave his body here for the crows!" (23)

So he thought, invoked that missile
And sent it against his opponent;
When Vibhishana saw it and hastened
In his love and said, "Gut it down
With the missile of the discus-bearer"?
And Lakshmana strung that arrow and sent it. (24)

---

4. The Kazhakam reading.

When advised by Vibhishana,
He sent that missile of Vishnu
And removed that furious Mohana,
Ravana was much enraged
That the one by the side of Lakshmana
Should advise him thus to Ravana's harm. (25)

He decided then to kill his brother
Who stood a picture of victory
With the weapon which he had got
Along with his wife from Maya, her father,
Made by Brahma in the fire of a yaga,
Like Vishnu's discus and Indra's thunderbolt
Which could deprive an enemy of his fame
And outlast the fire of Dissolution. (26)

Sent to kill, it would kill and come back,
Hitting even Brahma and laying him low.
Whirling it, and bowing to it
He hurled that spear at his brother
Standing not very far away. (27)

When he hurled it, Vibhishana
Knowing its nature full well,
Said, "This, Sir, will kill me.
There is no way of escaping it".
And when that noble one heard it,
He said, "Don't fear, I will deal with it",
And quickly reached the spot where he stood. (28)

The arrows and other weapons
Shot against it by Lakshmana
Did not avail--- any more than
A petty-minded sinner's abuse
Against a great ascetic.
Even the gods were much distressed,
Saying, "Dead is Vibhishana.
There is no way he can be saved". (29)

"Even if I die, fame will not",
Said Lakshmana meeting it,
"Virtue will result, good ones rejoice.
How can one just stand and stare
At a refugee being slaughtered?
Before the scandal of such inaction
Attaches itself to me
I will take that spear on my own chest". (30)

Vibhishana went before Lakshmana;
Angada brushing both aside
Went forward; brushing *him* aside
Went Sugriva; and in front of him
Hanuman hied. Who can tell
The distress which that scene witnessed? (31)

Moving faster than the wind
And pushing back all those in front,
Lakshmana said, "Stop! This is mine"
And took that spear on his golden chest
Which found its way right through him,
The distressed gods beating their eyes. (32)

"Where are you fleeing?" shouted Vibhishana,
Rising in his wrath like a maned lion;
And with his long club laid low
The horses and the charioteer
In Ravana's car, the gods looking up. (33)

Ravana furious rising in the sky
Discharged ten arrows at Vibhishana
And a thousand on Hanuman,
And, saying the fight is over"
Went away to enter Lanka. (34)

"For the sake of me who sought refuge
The world's darling has withered.
Where, treacherous fellow, are you fleeing?
I will kill you and die with you",
Said Vibhishana railing against the Rakshasa. (35)

"Mine the victory! What use is it
To kill that cow, Vibhishana?"
Thought Ravana, He would not stay
Nor look at anything, his anger gone,
And entered golden Lanka. (36)

The Rakshasa had departed, and Vibhishana
Crying aloud, mouth fully open
Fell down clutching Lakshmana's feet
The very picture of misery
With a love which could not be hidden,
And the monkey horde and its chief
Were plunged in a sea of sorrow. (37)

"With the gold-hued doughty[5] Lakshmana dead,
What use is my living? I too will die
This very instant--- and my Lord too
Will not survive this", he said,
To which Jambavan said, "Stop! stop!" (38)

"When Hanuman is here is it wise on our part
To worry about life? In a second
He can make all the world straighten itself.
He will bring the right medicine.
Lakshmana is still breathing.
Do not grieve even a tittle",
Said he, consoling them. (39)

---

5. Swaminatha Aiyar

Removing all the shafts from his body,
He told Hanuman, "You are not hurrying?
Can Rama endure this sight?
Whereupon seeing his anxiety
Hanuman leapt across the world. (40)

He leapt across it in one direction,
And having got those unfailing herbs
Once before, he didn't find it hard
To locate the exact spot
Where he had left them earlier
And brought over the buried treasure. (41)

He brought over that medicine mountain
And even before the drug was applied
Consciousness came back to all.
And for an elixir which could restore life
Was assuaging pain a great matter?
In a moment to the delight of the gods,
The young hero rose up recovered. (42)

He rose up and clasped Hanuman
With both his hands and enquired,
"My Father, is Vibhishana alive?"
And seeing that devoted friend
Sobbing with joy, lost his fear and sorrow
And said, "My sister-in-law is now free
And the Rakshasas are fallen". (43)

"This Hanuman by his acts can achieve
That rare thing called Dharma by the wise.
What is now difficult for Rama?
Virtue must triumph, vice lose
Both here and hereafter"? they all said
And proceeded towards Rama. (44)

Those victorious chiefs leapt
Over many hills of corpses
Reaching the sky, and seas of blood,
And arriving at Rama fell at his feet;
And he asked them, "What is the news?" (45)

Jambavan went mentally through all
And omitting nothing narrated
Impressively everything,
And the hero embracing Hanuman
Said, "You are my true-begotten son.
Having got you, great one,
What is it I have not got?
Have a long life, without impediment." (46)

Eyes streaming with tears, joy surging within him,
The brother who was only the body
While his soul Rama was outside,
Felt as if he was seeing their father
Who, causing them endless sorrow,
Had gone to heaven never to return,
And bowed to him with devotion. (47)

Looking at him, Rama said,
"This behoves our solar race
Which will give up its own self
To save one taking refuge with it.
Great hero, what you have done
Is priceless and well worthy of you. (48)

"Even he, that divine King
Who cut up his body to save a dove
Cannot rival you, so what
Need is there to speak of others?
Those are the really generous
Who when danger threatens their friends
Will act as a cow does to its calf". (49)

Then Rama, the long-limbed,
Removed his armour and other burdens
He had to wear to wage his battle
And handing over to Hanuman
His bow" too which rained so many arrows
Decided to rest on a hill
On which rested numerous clouds.

32. THE MONKEYS SEE THE BATTLEFIELD

Sugriva and his measureless host
Went to Rama to pay their respects;
And when they saw the huge numbers
Of the sinners who had been killed
They were frightened and astonished,
Their minds emptied of thought and feeling.
And were thoroughly abashed. (1)

When that offspring of the Sun
With his shoulders like pillars
Asked Rama, "How did you, Sir,
Emerge out of that flood of an army
Which stretched longer than the three worlds,
Rama replied, "Go and see
That field with the Rakshasa King[1]. (2)

The chiefs bowed down, and feeling curious
Said, "Let us go", and went quickly
With the brother of Ravana;
And when they saw with their own eyes
That crowded battlefield with its kites,
Vultures, hawks and numerous devils,
They were thoroughly frightened. (3)

They wailed, trembled, shouted and screamed;
Swelled, blabbered, sobbed, got heated,
Raised their heads, and gradually
Regained their lives and felt glad.
Who can do justice to what they felt? (4)

1. Vibhishana.

"Even if for a thousand years
One stares at this sea of the Rakshasa sinners
Stretching like the seven oceans amassed,
There will be no end to it.
You should therefore tell us about it",
Said they to Vibhishana
And he obliged them in due order. (5)

"Look, men on this gory field
Under a canopy of crows,
A congregation of clouds as it were,
Elephants cut down by arrows
Fierce as Death, their bodies sundered
But amassed and unable to move,
Huddled together for lack of space,
Lying like so many mountains! (6)

"Look at the red-eyed Rakshasas
Nailed to the elephants by Rama's arrows
Chasing each other in their speed,
And looking like so many lions
Sleeping on mountains full of snakes. (7)

"Look, men, at the faces of those
Hit by merciful Rama's arrows
Red with drink on a dark body
Like a lotus forest in a black sea
Shining with no banks to it! (8)

"Look at the elephants, musty and alive,
But unable to get out of a river of blood
Like whales swimming in a strange sea
Rising and sinking, not able to cope. (9)

"Look, men, at the huge chariots
Whose white flags are touching the sky,
Struggling, their horses struck down
By sharp arrows like lightning,
Resembling boats with their masts
Sailing on a rolling sea.[2] (10)

"Look, men, at the black devils
Keeping time with their hands
While headless torsos dance
Like one teaching the steps
Of Bharatanatyam to his pupils.[3] (11)

Look, men, how the limbs
Of those sharp-teethed heroes
Getting together would clasp these devils
But those cleverly slip away. (12)

"Look at those elephants with their golden bands
Fallen on the ground and facing
Opposite directions, so that they look
Like a strange animal with two heads. (13)

"Look at the many mouths here
Of those whose skins are dark like the sea,
Mouths open with an angry laugh
Resembling a yaga pit
Out of whose cinders issues smoke! (14)

"The chowries fallen from the ears
Of elephants with their shining bands
Brushing the faces of the dead
Are like swans on a lotus pond. (15)

---

2. This appears as no. 9 in Gopalakrishnamachariar.

3. Another reading suggests that what is taught is how to conduct a puppet dance.

"Look, men, at the white tusks
Of separate elephants, riderless,
Stained by the blood in which they lie
Which makes them look like the crescent moon
In a sky with clouds, red but scattered! (16)

"Look at the devils which are dancing
Having had their fill of the flesh
Roasted by the sparks which flew
From the eyes of those sinners
Who were all laid low by the arrows
Which flew from Rama, with the flags,
Bows, clubs, spears and chariots
And the howdahs on their elephants with feet
like drums (17)

"Look, men, at those sharks
Confused by the elephants
Brought down in the stream of blood
Mixing with the sea,
And thinking that they were mountains
Avoiding them. (18)

"Look at those who were walking on earth
On whom fell the heavy bodies
Of those shot in the sky
And unable to escape that load
Died, their eyes shooting fire. (19)

"Look at the sun which though it is noon
Has turned red, as if it is dawn
Because of the blood spurting on it
From Rakshasas riding in chariots,
On elephants and on horses
And those flying in the air. (20)

"See how the white moon has turned red
And looks like the sun because of the blood
Flowing like a river and hitting the sky
Of these enemies speeding like the wind! (21)

"The sky, the earth and the shark-filled sea
All bedewed with blood
And the drops of this strange rain
Covering the world,
The star-like flowers and the honey-sucking bees
Are changed in colour,
And forest and grove put out new sprigs;
Come and look, come and look! (22)

"A great river of blood sweeps down
Elephants warring against hills
With their tusks, pearls and jewels,
And huge trees setting birds a-clamour;
Sprigs, umbrellas and chowries
White like foam rush along
Banks of corpses to the sea.
Come and look, come and look! (23)

The battlefield is a series of ponds
With elephants for banks, the Rakshasas' hands
Stones shored up, horses for waves,
Elephants' limbs for crocodiles;
Shining faces for lotuses;
Falling intestines the moss,
Corpses mire and blood water!
Come and look, come and look! (24)

"In this farmland of a battlefield
With weapons for ploughs, blood water impounded,
Warriors for farmers, fat for mire,
Elephants for buffaloes, mown heads rice plants,
Come and watch the farming! (25)

"The blood from the bodies of the huge Rakshasas
Is dragging elephants to the nether world
Through the holes which Rama's arrows
Pierced through the earth
When he drew back his bowstring
Making a noise like thunder!
Here are the whirlpools of that river---
Come and look, come and look! (26)

These arrows did not just pierce
Palms, bodies, necks, hands and chests,
But went through them in every direction,
Up and down so that no arrow
Can be found sticking in an elephant
Or a horse or a Rakshasa. Come and look! (27)

"These ten crore elephants fragrant like the lotus
Musty, deadly, behaving like boars
Came with the ambrosia, and now
Are dead with their riders. (28)

"These twelve crore elephants whose must
Will never cease to drip
Though rains may stop, and the seas grow dry
Came out of a yaga Brahma performed. (29)

"These fourteen crore elephants are the progeny
Of Indra's Airavatam.
Their lives may lapse, blood dry up,
Joy evaporate, but their must will not. (30)

"A *padma* in number, crore of crores
Are these ones with no work assigned by Brahma
Which come from the north, without lids
But with must streaming from their face (31)

"These a thousand crore elephants
Were given as tribute by the King of the gods;
Those countless in number
Were given as tribute by the King of the Titans. (32)

"These a thousand thousand horses
Arose of old with ambrosia;
Those opposite were the ones which were won
When Varuna was defeated in the west. (33)

"Those horses, a thousand thousand,
Were lost by the god of Wealth;
And these a *padma* in number
Were seized in the fight with the angry Vidyadharas," (34)

Then those good monkeys said,
"Whether you show them or we see them ourselves,
These sights are as inexhaustible
As the great Himalayas:
We will see them again later--
But now let us go and see Rama",
And proceeded accordingly. (35)

They went and bowed to Rama,
And admiring his great prowess
Sighed deep and started to think
Of what was to be done next. (36)

"Those a thousand crore elephants
Were given as tribute by the King of the gods;
Those countless in number
Were given as tribute by the King of the Titans. (32)

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Arose of old with ambrosia;
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When Varuna was defeated in the west. (33)

"Those horses, a thousand thousand,
Were lost by the god of Wealth;
And these, a padma in number
Were seized in the fight with the angry Vajrabahu." (34)

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"Whether you show them or we see them ourselves
These sights are as inexhaustible
As the great Himalayas:
We will see them again later—
But now let us go and see Rama",
And proceeded accordingly. (35)

They went and bowed to Rama,
And admiring his great prowess
Sighed deep and started to think
Of what was to be done next. (36)

33. RAVANA SURVEYS THE FIELD

Having driven the monkeys away
And killed Lakshmana as he thought
To the distress of the gods,
Ravana went to Lanka.

He was eager to entertain
With the right kind of food
Those who out of their love for him
Had fought on his side. (1)

He ordered the denizens of heaven to come
And they came down quickly with others.
"Provide these with heavenly joys",
Said he; "if you give less,
You will forfeit your lives." (2)

Wine, meat and other good things,
Clothes, sandal-paste, fresh flowers.
Powders for bathing, and beds
Filled the place inside and out. (3)

All the heavenly maidens came
To smear them with good oil,
Bathe them in fragrant waters,
Give them sweet food and drinks
And spread the beds out for them. (4)

They sang, and danced with *bhaava* [1]
Their practised dances; joined them
In their beds: the men enjoyed
The wages of their past good deeds,
Spending only the interest on them
While the principal remained intact! (5)

From kings to slaves, those doughty Rakshasas
Treated so promptly to heavenly joys
Relished their entertainment
And could see no limit to their pleasure. (6)

To the Rakshasa King who had contrived all this
Came and bowed his messengers
And whispered to him in his ear
What had happened to his army in the field. (7)

With trembling bodies, dried-up tongues,
Contracted breaths and broken hearts,
Their eyes drawn in, they forced in anguish
Words out of their unwilling mouths. (8)

"O gods-beater! Except for these
Eating their feast here today,
The thousand-*vellam* army you sent
Has all been destroyed in seven *naazhikais* [2]
By the single bow held by Rama. (9)

"The feast you have offered using the gods
Should rather be deemed as obsequies
To the Rakshasas of your kin
Of whom none is left in the world
Except the stay-at-homes here!" (10)

---

1. Expression of feeling apart from the mere technique of the steps.

2. A Naazhikai has a duration of twentyfour minutes.

When he heard that news at the height of his pleasure
Anger, fear and grief conjoined
Stunned him into a mere painting
With red eyes like melted wax
Darting fire, while he breathed hard. (11)

"Those Rakshasas stronger than I
Cannot have died. Their number
Was more than that of the sea's sand
To say that they have all gone
Leaving none behind must be wrong.
You must be telling a lie", he said. (12)

Mali beside him heard it and said,
"Is this such an incredible thing?
Will your messenger tell a lie?
Doesn't just one deciding it
Burn all the world at Dissolution
In the course of a single instant? (13)

"Have we not heard the Vedas say
That through the power that is in Him
There is one that made, protects and destroys
All these immeasurable worlds?
Can the words of Vibhishana prove a lie
That Rama is the one who of old
Made the great serpent his bed? (14)

"A creature of this world can eat
Only what is suitable.
But we have seen a fire consume
Whatever is thrust into it.
A tempest too can sweep away
Hills, trees, grass and herds.
Is there ever a limit to power? (15)

"The wealth of Indra became yours;
It has also left you now.
There is nothing more to be done.
Through you all your clan has perished.
Do what you think is proper", he said,
To which Ravana reacted in wrath. (16)

"I threw my spear at Lakshmana
And presented the god of Death with his life;
The monkey chiefs are plunged in grief;
Rama seeing this will find
Life a burden, and will not live.
If I must suffer I will do so:
But mine is the garland of victory". (17)

Then those messengers who had seen it all
Said, "Sir, as soon as Hanuman's medicine
Touched his body, he revived.
There was no delay. All embraced him
And are back. You can go and see". (18)

Doubting it, and to assure himself,
He got on the top of a gold-decked tower
And saw to his grief with his own eyes
How his great army had been destroyed. (19)

He heard the noise made by the wives
Of those who had lost their lives in the fight,
Their heads in their hands, their blue eyes red,
And their cry of lament drowning the sea. (20)

Tears streamed from his eyes and mixed with the sea
As he saw the corpses of countless elephants
Borne away by the rivers of blood
Flowing from the Rakshasas' bodies,
Which swept mountains too on their way
Down to the depths of the earth
While devils danced in their fresh stream. (21)

He saw the corpses of many Rakshasas
Dancing headless in joy to the tunes
Sung by small-bodied short-legged foxes,
While devils kept beating their well-learned times,
Thanking Rama the expert bowman
For releasing their spirits out of their bodies.[3] (21 a)

He saw, tears bubbling in his eyes,
  Which darted fire and blood,
The blood from the numerous men
  Killed by Rama's shafts
As inexhaustible as the liberality
  Proverbial in Tamil life and culture,
First sucked in by the sea
  Then spat out of it.[4] (22)

He saw too Rakshasa women
Gouging their eyes out[5] with swords or their nails,
When they saw devils helping themselves
To the flesh of their dead husbands---
Strong-shouldered ones whose souls
Had gone flitting to heaven. (23)

---

3. It was believed that unless a minimum number--- which ran to tens of thousands--- was killed in a battle, the torso dance would not take place, which meant that the spirits of the dead would remain imprisoned in their mutilated bodies.

4. Occurring as no. 25 in Gopalakrishnamachariar.

5. The Kazhakam version should be rendered, "Pursuing the devils on earth, catching them in heaven, and gouging their eyes out".

He saw the monkeys making a noise
  Enough to split heaven;
He saw the devils dancing with joy
  Enough to split the earth;
He saw the joyous gods with eyes
  Opened enough to split them;
And descended from that tower with sorrow
  Enough to split his heart. (24)

A jeer appearing on his lips;
Smoke from his mouth, tongue and nose;
Sparks from his eyes; sin in his heart;
Fire in his speech born of rage,
He proceeded to his palace. (25)

34. RAVANA ASCENDS HIS CHARIOT

Looking at the mountainous Big Pot
With his fiery eyes and smoky brows,
Ravana ordered, "Rouse all those
Still alive in Lanka
By beat of drum from an elephant". (1)

When the drum was beaten
Fourteen hundred crores of Rakshasas
With beflagged chariots, elephants, horses
And others[1] gathered together
As if Lanaka's sea was drained. (2)

Ravana then invoked as prescribed
The three-eyed Siva to ensure
Success here and heaven hereafter,
Gave unstinting gifts away
To all who wanted them, and got ready
For the fight as directed by the Vedas. (3)

On chest like a hill with its cascades of garlands
He girded on a mail of gold
Which shone like a thousand suns
Being the creation of Brahma in a yaga,
Which he got from Indra after defeating him.[2] (4)

---

1. Camels?

2. According to Gopalakrishnamachariar. But Swaminatha Aiyar interprets the stanza as if Ravana wore the mail from Indra over the one from Brahma.

He wound a garment round his waist
Like the serpent round Mount Mandara
And attached a dagger to it on the right.
He wore too a waist-string with gems
Like so many planets circling Meru. (5)

The dhoti he wore spread out like the wings
Of Garuda and reminded one
Of the sound of the Vedas when recited,
And another was fastened round his waist
With a belt--- a serpent with white teeth
Each of which looked like a crescent moon! (6)

The waist-band he wore was of glittering gems
As if garnered from lightnings in the clouds
To which was attached a series of belts
Flower-like in shape and making a noise
Like the rumblings of lions in mountain caves. (7)

Shining anklets were attached to his feet
Whose tinkle frightened heaven, earth
And all other worlds, as thunder does snakes,
And cloth-bands went with those anklets. (8)

His twenty hands were well fitted
With leather gloves, and his fingers
With covers for them, all of which looked
Like Adisesha poison-stained
And serpents with darting tongues. (9)

Round his neck like Mandara
Were great necklaces like Vasuki;
And ear-rings hung from his ears
Like the rays of the sun which shot up
When the gods honed him to restore his lustre.[3] (10)

His shoulders were saffron-red like the hills
At which the sun rises and sets;
And his ear-drops bright like the foe of the dark,
And pearl strings white like the moon and the stars. (11)

His ten crowns glittering as if all
The suns in the morning had gathered in the sea;
And over them his white umbrella
A moon not varying but always full; (12)

The teeth in his cavernous mouths
Like crescent moons in a ruddy cloud
Floating in the blue sky,
Or like the sprouts in an auspicious vessel[4]; (13)

His ten foreheads with victory bands
Of pearls of uniform brilliance
Like the bands of pearls worn by the *diggajas*
Mighty with their three musts; (14)

---

3 The reference is to the story in which the sun with the help of Indra had an illegal connection with a sage's wife in the sage's absence. Her body had been made temporarily lifeless by her husband, but was restored to life by Indra who entered her dead body for this purpose. The sage turning up and seeing what was happening cursed both the gods. The sun lost all his splendour, and had to be ground on a whetstone so that his rays could regain their sharpness.

4 Placed before a bride and groom at the time of their marriage.

His crowned heads never at anyone's feet
Save the tinkling ones of coy maidens[5],
Driving the sun away with their brilliance
And lighting up not one but all the worlds; (15)

Having won the three worlds
Of the Nagas, ours and Brahma's
Wearing the victory garland of the gods
And the *tumbai* which attracted bees as well
As the loving gaze of the women; (16)

He buckled on his quiver of arrows
Inexhaustible--- why invoke
The sea, its sands, its fish or stars,
Or learning for comparison
When, even after the five elements die,
His fame is certain to endure? (17)

"Come, chariot", said he, and it came.
Even if heaven, the earth and Naga land
Got into it, it would have borne them
Lightly as if they were a flower.
And it could go, without need of horses,
Anywhere he wished in an instant. (18)

It came however with a thousand horses
Borne by the one which came with nectar
And also by the sun's green steeds
Which the fiery mare of the sea
Bore to the mighty god of the Wind. (19)

That chariot could go in an instant
On the earth, in the sky, and on the sea;
In a fire, in a fight, beyond earth's borders
In Brahma's land or any other world. (20)

---

5 This contradicts Aranyakandam verse 556.

It had on it a thousand crore bells
Of the type worn by the *diggajas;*
It was tall as if the solar sphere
Had been heaped on Mount Meru.
It literally cost the earth! (21)

It carried all the weapons
Which the sages, the gods and the world's chief men
Had gifted or yielded, their number as many
As that of the small sands of the sea. (22)

That abode of victory
Was strong enough to survive
Even if Vishnu's discus, Siva's hatchet
And Brahma's water-pot should cease to be.
Even the gods thought its workmanship rare. (23)

Offering that chariot the wordhip due to it,
He gave away to countless priests
Wealth which was beyond their dreams
And great gifts as part of his duty. (24)

He bowed and got up; and Indra and the others
Though recovered earlier, grew diffident again;
They were perturbed and bewildered.
Even those who had mastered their senses
Were frightened, not knowing what to do.
All the world was distressed. (25)

"By my action today", he swore,
"Either Sita shall knead her stomach
And be plunged in a pool of sorrow,
Or Maya's daughter[6] shall do so.
One of these two I will effect" (26)

---

6. His wife Mandodari.

Crowns on his numerous heads
Countless weapons in his numerous hands,
He rose and stretched himself
Like the world-measures in the past,
To the astonishment of heaven
And the earth girt by the salt sea. (27)

He slapped his shoulders and raised a din
Which split the sky and the mountains,
Wounded the green earth deep,
Ejected the sun out of his chariot,
Made the moon spill his ambrosia
And wander distressed around. (28)

Exulting that the grim fight was near,
He twanged his bow shattering mountains;
And the gem-decked wives of the gods and the Titans
Frightened, felt their wedding-strings.[7] (29)

The sea shrinking, the earth expanding,
And all lives feeling terrified,
It seemed to those who saw him
That the many-headed Sesha
Unable to carry the earth
Had risen up with his jewelled heads! (30)

All of the world's denizens
From the gods to the Rakshasas
Spat their blood out and their lives
At the sight of Ravana starting the war
While his eyes blazed with twice the flame
Of the fire of Badavagni. (31)

7. Praying that they might never part with them.

Sugriva and the others saw
The world's confusion, the gods' distress,
The panic of the mountains, sky and land
And the agitation of the terrified sea. (32)

"Has the world burst?" arose a clamour,
An unusual hubbub rising and spreading;
"Many things seem to be topsy-turvy
And cause confusion. What could have happened?"
Said they all and arose. (33)

As if the seas, the mountains and the clouds
And Meru were all flying up
The great army came with Ravana in his chariot
Making a noise like the roars of the sea. (34)

"Ravana is here. The advance guard
Of the Rakshasa army has arrived";
Said Vibhishana hastening.
"Lord, our host is shaken and depressed.
Even the gods have all scattered". (35)

Sugriva and the others saw
The world's confusion, the gods' distress,
The panic of the mountains, sky and land
And the agitation of the terrified sea. (32)

"Has the world burst?" arose a clamour,
An unusual foreboding and apprehension.
"Many things seem to be together now
And cause confusion. What could have happened?"
Said they all and arose. (33)

As if the seas, the mountains and the clouds
And Meru were all flying up
The great army came with Ravana in his chariot
Making a noise like the roar of the sea. (34)

"Ravana is here. The advance guard
Of the Rakshasa army has arrived,"
Said Vibhishana trembling.
"Lord, our host is shaken and dispersed.
Even the gods have all scattered." (35)

35. RAMA ASCENDS HIS CHARIOT

Rama said the same thing
Which the milk-sea bedded on an earlier day
Had said to the gods in their misery
When they sought his help, "Have no fear" (1)

That tusker Vishnu girded to his right
His sword deadly as Death's noose,
Saying, "The end has come today
To the distress of that maid and of the gods". (2)

Since all the world is within him,
What can help him from outside?
If an outside guard is available
Should we not call it the Supergod? (3)

He covered with the proper gloves
His fingers and hand--- now death's oven;
And put a quiver on his back
With arrows limitless like the world. (4)

"The war will end today", said Siva,[1]
"Rama is certain to win.
Gods, don't fear; but send him a car
Well-decked and with helpful horses". (5)

The gods heard and said, "It should be done",
And Indra obeying set about it.
"I will make that chariot a worthy temple
To circle the three worlds in an instant",
He said and ordered it should be brought. (6)

---

1. Brahma according to the Swaminatha Aiyar reading

Matali brought it--- a golden chariot
As if the sea-girt earth had come up
And spread itself in the sky,
The moon and other planets underneath. (7)

Its front rod strong as the seven hills,[2]
Its wheels and axles subduing the earth,
Its floor without gaps, its rope the eight serpents[3]
Its height touching the very sky. (8)

Its floor so firm was made up
Of the years, seasons, months and days
Both past and to come; it had for garlands
The stars in a string. It stood like a mountain. (9)

Its walls were all the quarters
Gem-set and faultless;
Its waving flags were the clouds;
It shone with the strength of the five elements. (10)

All the medicinal plants were used
To provide the festoons for that chariot;
The noise it made was like the noise
Of Dissolution when the conch-filled seas
Rise roaring to overwhelm the worlds! (11)

It had a bar in the shape of a lotus
Like the lotus of the Lord from which sprang Brahma;
Its breadth was like that of Sesha
The bed of the Lord who at Dissolution
Swallows all living things to spit them out again. (12)

---

2. Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Saktimat, Riksha, Vindhya, Paripatra.

3 Actually, there are nine great serpents: Ananta, Vasuki, Sesha, Padmanatha, Kambala, Sankapala, Dhritarashtra, Takshaka and Kaliya.

The shining chariot had for its horses
The four Vedas and many sacrifices;
The seven seas, the seven hills, the seven worlds,
The five elements, the three fires, the yagas,
The oblations and the five senses; (13)

The five organs, the five flames,
The four quarters, the three gunas,
The ten different winds, the great days,
And the long nights for fighting! (14)

The gods bowed to it, and said,
"Strong one, come at our father's bidding,
Help us and get us victory"
And strewed soft flowers upon it,
Matali driving it well. (15)

That chariot came down from heaven
To fight evil with the speed of thought;
And worshipped by heaven and the other worlds
Came to Rama and stood before him. (16)

"It is not the one-wheeled chariot of the sun;
Nor the final fire of Dissolution;
Nor can it be Meru as it keeps moving
Is it the Trinity's unique car?" (17)

Wondered Rama. "And why is it here?"
And the Emperor's son asked Matali,
"At whose bidding have you brought
This chariot of shining gold?"
And the latter told him all about it. (18)

'My father, this was created
By Siva and Brahma long ago.
It is brilliant as a thousand suns;
It will survive all the worlds
And belongs to Indra. (19)

"It can take in all the worlds
As big as itself; shrink or expand
To suit its load. Resembles him
Who once swallowed all the worlds;
And, Lotus-Eyed, it is as swift
As one of your own arrows. (20)

"Should it perceive sight, mind or wind
It will overtake it.
Feelings can only limp behind it.
Sky and earth are the same to it.
So too, my Father, both water and fire. (21)

"O Creator of the world,
There are seven seas, and twice that number
Of solid worlds. They may change some time.
But where is a chariot like this
That will not undergo any change? (22)

"The gods, the chief rishis, Siva
And he who made the world, Lord,
Ordered it, and Indra saw
That it was sent down", said Matali
Who knew the mind of his horses. (23)

Rama was a little doubtful
Whether this could be a trick
Of the hostile Rakshasas.
But the yoked horses neighed the Vedas
Confirming that Matali spoke the truth! (24)

No longer doubting, Rama told
The good one, "Tell me your name"
And he replied, his heart full,
"They call me the driver Matali" (25)

Looking at Hanuman and the lion-cub Lakshmana,
"Tell me what you think", he asked;
And they bowing replied to him,
"No need, Sir, to doubt that this chariot is Indra's" (26)

Evil crest-fallen rolled on the ground;
Worshipful Virtue leapt up with joy;
The gods and the Brahmins, so long depressed,
Their Hands strengthened rose aloft
As did Rama ascending the chariot. (27)

36. RAVANA KILLED

When the gods saw how the wheels of that chariot
Sank in the earth as Rama ascended it,
They said nothing about the strength
Of Garuda fiercer than Dissolution's wind
But praised, threw flowers and invoked blessings
On the shoulders of Hanuman! (1)

"Rise, chariot! Take all our strength!
Let the warring Rakshasa die today!
Victory to the King of kings!
Let the wives of the Rakshasa warriors wail",
Shouted the gods; and the chariot
Rose from the dust as if from a sea! (2)

When the Rakshasa saw it, he said,
"So the gods have given him this?",
Pouted his lips, ground his teeth,
Said, "Let it be", and directed
His own great chariot to be driven
Towards Rama with his shining bow. (3)

All the monkeys who had scattered
Shed their fear, saying "The gods
Have sent this chariot. Valiant Rama
Is sure to win", and going around
Flung trees and rocks, and raised a din
As if the quarters with the globe
Were simply going to pieces! (4)

The sound of the drums and the warriors,
The noises of the battlefield,
The roar of the two chariots---
All of them mingling made such a din
That everyone was deafened and dazed
And fell down to the ground. (5)

Looking at Matali, the Emperor's son
Said, "Listen to me with love.
Let the exulting enemy
Do first whatever he wants to do.
Then you do what I ask you to do.
There is no need to act in a hurry". (6)

"Lord", said Matali, "if I do not consider
Your intention, the horses' thoughts,
The enemy's plans, the pluses and minuses,
And the certainties which time can bring,
My skill will not be up to much
Unless its aim is to betray",
And spotless Rama agreed with him (7)

"Rama is here, in the car sent by Indra!"
Said Big Pot to hill-like Ravana,
"A great fight is toward between you two;
It will be wrong for me to do nothing.
And just stand and watch the two of you
Permit me too to do something". (8)

"I will kill that Rama", said Ravana,
"As a maned lion an elephant,
If you will deal with his brother
You will advance on victory".
And the fierce Rakshasa saying yes
Went away from him. (9)

Before he could reach Lakshmana
Rama's divine chariot approached,
And when it came, Big Pot,
Blazing with wrath ordered
That his chariot should attack it---
And the charioteer said with deference (10)

"Can even countless crores of Ravanas
Face Rama today and hope to return?
They will all lie dead on the ground.
Seeing what he looks like
You will do well, Sir, to avoid him.
To leave him alone is the thing to do". (11)

'Fellow", said Big Pot, pointing,
'I don't eat you up alive
Only because people will talk".
And at that time Rama's chariot
Went straight against that furious one's
And a big fight was joined. (12)

Rama's shafts, a Badavagni,
Dried up all the golden chariots,
Horses, elephants and sword-girt warriors---
A vast and crowded sea each one--
And Big Pot attacked him all by himself. (13)

He rained his arrows on the flag
Displaying the figure of a thunderbolt;
The noisy chariot and the charioteer;
And Rama's shoulders--- making a noise
Enough to tear the sky and the quarters
And the sacred one just gave a smile! (14)

With one shaft his bow, with one his armour
With one each his two hands,
With one his shoulders, with one his neck
He cut off and laid low:
And the Rakshasa cut up piecemeal
Lay dead on the ground--- his word[1] and his deed
So completely discordant! (15)

The fierce Rakshasa who had conquered
The three worlds and all the directions
Saw the end of Big Pot
And how his body had been cut up;
And urged his charioteer, "Drive",
And he following that instruction,
The great chariot went forward. (16)

Rama thinking that unless
His huge army spread like a fog
Was destroyed, he would not yield
Bending his bow killed it all quickly
Before Ravana could see what he did! (17)

Then the left shoulders of Ravana
Throbbed, their epaulettes falling off
As when the wind of Dissolution
Sweeps, the worlds go under,
The suns dry up, and the mountains
From northern Meru begin to quake. (18)

It rained blood; there was thunder
To shake the world and shatter the mountains;
The sun lost its' brightness,
Its halo absorbing the centre. (19)

---

1 His wrath with his charioteer and what actually happened. In Valmiki, Big Pot is killed by Sugriva.

The horses slept in their saddles;
Bow strings snapped as the bow was bent;
Tongues and mouths dried up;
The day's fresh flowers stank of meat. (20)

Vultures and crows swarmed on his flag
With a picture of a Vina; his horses shed tears;
His elephants stood as if caught
In a cage meant for wild beasts. (21)

Such bad omens delighting the gods
Made no impression upon him.
"Can a mere man ever conquer me?"
He thought, and took no note of them. (22)

As his chariot came speeding along
The warriors on both sides retreated
As the world retreats at Dissolution
When the sea spreads overwhelming it. (23)

Like thoughtless action against wisdom,
Illusions against true knowledge,
Sin in its might and steadfast virtue
The two confronted each other. (24)

Like Sesha with his thousand heads
And the strong and victorious Garuda
They were engaged in a conflict
As if night was fighting day. (25)

It was as if two *diggajas*
Were engaged in fighting each other;
Or like the fight between Narasimha
And the hill-like Hiranyakasipu. (26)

Or as on that day long ago
Incited by two bows and the question
Which of these was the greater god,
He who measured the three worlds
And Siva engaged in a conflict. (27)

Ravana then blew his conch
Which made Siva and Brahma tremble
And drowned all the noise produced
By the gods, and split the age-old worlds. (28)

When that conch was sounded
And the gods asked anxiously, "What is that noise?"
Vishnu's conch feeling jealous
Sounded too of its own accord. (29)

The Lord's five weapons[2] came and stood
Beside him, to be useful to him,
But as the Vedas could not know him
So he too in his present disguise
Knew neither himself nor these weapons (30)

Matali then blew Indra's conch
Aristocratic and garlanded
Making the quarters, sky, sea
Earth, hills and the gods tremble! (31)

Even before the cruel arrows
Of the Rakshasa fell on him,
Countless shafts hit his body
From the eyes of the heavenly nymphs (32)

The horses yoked to their chariots
Glared at each other with ruddy eyes
As if each of them in its rage
Would eat up the one opposed to it. (33)

---

2. Vishnu's conch, discus, club, bow and sword.

The flags with the vina and thunderbolt
On their two chariots
Clashed frequently against each other
With a noise which seemed to betaken
The end of the earth, sky and sea. (34)

The twang of the red-eyed Ravana's bow
Was as if the seven seas were roaring;
The twang of the discus-bearer's bow
Was like the thunder of Dissolution. (35)

All the fierce warriors there
From Hanuman down could do nothing
Except be worried and bemused
And, depressed, fall down! (36)

Even the gods forgot their tasks
Not knowing what might happen,
And wondering and bothered about the issue
Went forward and back agitated and unhappy. (37)

Before Rama rained his arrows
The gods from above rained their flowers
Having come to watch their fight---
Who will want to help a tyrant? (38)

Rama's bow ruling the world
And Ravana's which only he could handle
Stood like two rainbows in the sky
With their strings made of lightning. (39)

The ceasless roar of the sea nowadays
And the thundering noise of the clouds
Are probably the living remnants
Of the noisy shouts of Raváṇa then
And the twang made by his mountainous bow! (40)

Thunder, if well considered,
Does not descend from the clouds---
But the sparks of fire from Ravana's eyes
Entering the sky and descending! (41)

When Ravana laughed, Rama excepted
The four quarters trembled;
The gods stuttered, and their legs shook;
The clouds quavered, and Lanka too! (42)

The flashes from Ravana's weapons
Went in all directions
And consumed everything there---
They have survied in the red of the clouds
And also in thunder! (43)

"There is no need", Ravana screamed,
"To kill this pigmy with my bow;
I will twirl him in his god-given chariot
Up to the sky and dash him on the ground. (44)

"Were sharp shafts like lightning", said he,
"Meant for men? No, I would rather
Break his chariot into pieces,
Seize him with his bow, and imprison him". (45)

With a throbbing mind mixed with fury,
Eyes darting fire, the cruel tyrant
Bent his bow and discharged from it
Fiery arrows, as if broadcast
By the swift and thundering breeze. (46)

Like thunder, like fire, like distressful death
Which can enter secret places,
Like rain, mantric, destructive of the weapons
Wielded by the enemy
They were bigger than even the big snake
Wound round the churner which produced ambrosia! (47)

When even the gods were afraid
That they would pierce even Meru
And not staying within it
Would go through the globe,
Rama, the sea of mercy,
With a rain of golden arrows
Swift as the wind intercepted
And destroyed them as they came. (48)

As a man's efforts are destroyed
By his past sins, so Ravana's shafts;
But he the sinner sent many more
Ceaseless like Dissolution's rain. (49)

They covered the sky, covered the quarters, covered
the mountains;
Covered the gods' eyes, covered the sea, covered
the earth;
Covered the digits of learned men;
Covered fire and covered darkness.
"What an astonishing feat of war!"
Said the god who had covered himself
With the skin of an elephant.[3] (50)

All the other gods and the Brahmins
Frightened closed their eyes with their hands;
The monkey army was like a mountain
Hammered at once by a thousand thunders;
And the great bowman seeing it all
Wished to put a stop to it. (51)

The arrows which Rama discharged
Like the help rendered to a good Brahmin
At the time of a famine
Increased and multiplied in its results;
While those discharged by the Rakshasa
Yielded the fruit of his past sins. (52)

3. Siva.

That doughty tyrant would despatch in an instant
A hundred thousand fierce arrows
And Rama would cut them all down.
Those cut arrows, sharp and fiery,
Would drink up the water in the sea
And make it first a mire, then dirt
And finally patches of islands. (53)

Against that bowman shooting his arrows
That able fighter would hurl with his hands
A club, a hatchet, a *tamaram*, a stick,
An iron pestle, circle, discus and trident. (54)

A thousand spears, a thousand hatchets,
A thousand *ezhus*, a thousand arrows,
And a thousand other weapons would all
Be destroyed, each set of them,
By a single arrow in the shape
Of air, of fire, or of thunder
Sent by Rama the raincloud-hued! (55)

When this equal contest went on,
Stung by Ramas' sharp arrows
As if an elephant by a goad
Ravana took ten bows in ten hands
And rained his shafts from all of them
Like ceaseless showers from a throng of clouds! (56)

The rain of arrows from the god
And that from the fire-eyed wretch
Filled all space, so that the five elements
From earth upwards watching the fight
Lost their interest, being burnt! (57)

As if it was the Mandara hill,[4]
Or the medicinal mountain Maruti brought,
Or one of the three floating towns,[5]
Or the phantom world of the Gandharvas[6]
The Rakshasas' chariot rose in the air. (58)

The rain of arrows sent down from his chariot
By Lanka's King piercing the monkeys
Left them all either dead or dying
In the sight of Rama. (59)

"Our army of bulls is being slaughtered.
Is the stay going to protect him?[7]
I will so discharge my arrows
That his many heads shall fall with his shoulders ---
Make the chariot rise", said Rama. (60)

"I will do that", said the wise Matali
And took up that whirlwind of a chariot:
And that divine car arose
Like the sun above the moon.[8] (61)

The two chariots circling each other
Scattered the clouds beyond the quarters;
Made the stars drop down and break;
And pulverised the tops of mountains. (62)

---

4. Brought by air by Garuda to churn the ocean.
5. Which were all destroyed by Siva when they proved a menace to everybody.
6. Seeing which in the air betokens disaster to a country or a man.
7. Adopting the Kazhakam punctuation.
8. The Swaminatha Aiyar translation renders this "Like the moon above the sun" citing the *Akanaanuru* and *Kandapuraanam* justifying this reversal.

They would go first right, then left;
Be in the sky, then on earth;
Rise from the left, then from the right---
So that the sea, the hills and the globe
Whirled around like a potter's wheel! (63)

Even the gods who knew the chariots
Could only know that they were two
Circling around. They could not tell
Which was Rama's and which Ravana's
As they whirled round with a speed
Which could take them to any world. (64)

Because of the dashing chariot wheels
No stars could be seen undisplaced;
And because of the flying sparks
No mountains found unpulverised,
On quarters unscorched, or brings alive
Which had not regurgitated blood! (65)

The gods watching the chariots said,
"Now they are in Indra's heaven";
Then, "Now they are in the moon's sphere";
Then, "Now they are in Brahma's world";
Then, "Now they are on Mandara". (66)

The gods claiming to know all
Said, "They are in the milky ocean";
Then, "Beyond the great seas";
Then, "In the western sea"; then, "The Eastern";
Then, "There is thunder in those wheels!" (67)

They would ask, "Are they back? The sky torn?"
"Are they down? Are those chariots
Drawn by horses or some strange wind?
The world is gone!", they would lament. (68)

In the seven seas and the seven isles,
The seven mountains and seven worlds,
At the border of the spherical world
They moved around without ceasing
Like the wind of Dissolution. (69)

The weapons which the Rakshasa flung
In the seven seas, the even worlds,
The seven islands and the seven mountains
Were those he had gathered to help him when needed
And he used them like raindrops. (70)

The weapons which Ravana flung or aimed
Went round the world destroying it ---
And Rama merely checked them
And did not himself attack the foe. (71)

After visiting the mountains and seas,
Up and down, and all the places
The sun covers, these winds of Dissolution
Reached Lanka in an instant. (72)

Driven by expert charioteers
The horses on both the sides
Traversed worlds thrice as many
As the sands of the sea.
Yet they were not tired, didn't sweat. (73)

The fiery-eyed Ravana
Brought down with a crescent-shaped arrow
The huge, strong, fierce flag
On the top of Indra's chariot
Carrying the image of a thunderbolt. (74)

When that flag fell in the noisy sea
Itself making a noise like thunder.
It was as though a huge lump of iron
Burnt red-hot was plunged into water
And the water of the sea shrank! (75)

With sharp shafts he covered the steeds
In Rama's chariot till now undamaged
Like the writings of sacred scripture;
And also shot a dozen cruel arrows
At the doughty chest of matchless Matali. (76)

The arrows of the dark Rakshasa King
Plunged into the good Matalis' chest
Caused Rama greater pain
Than the lance which pierced Lakshmana's chest. (77)

The fierce arrows he shot in a series
Out of his bow which resembled
The rainbow and the crescent moon
Covered Rama so completely
That the unwinking gods could not see him! (78)

The mighty gods became afraid
Misled into thinking that Rama was defeated;
The foe hurrahed; the wind grew still
Up and down; all earth was frightened (79)

Fire lost its brightness, the seas not surging
Were struck dead; the sun and the moon
Stopped and retraced their course;
The clouds went dry and desiccated. (80)

Hastening Mars nearing Visaka [9]
The *diggajas* shed their must and pride;
The motionless seas dared not make a noise;
The mountain Meru began to shake. (81)

Sugriva and Lakshmana
And the others not seeing Rama
Were perplexed and unhappy
Like forest elephants missing their leader.
All the horses were agitated
Like the fish in the sea when it was bridged. (82)

In an instant Rama removed
With a batch of arrows those which covered him
And made Ravana miserable
With his shafts--- which gladdened the gods (83)

He who dwelt in the hearts of those
To whom he was food and water
Shot with his far reaching arrows
At the mountainous bows in Ravana's hands---
Each hand raised like a pillar---
So as to break them in the middle. (84)

The great blaze which even while sleeping
Knew exactly what happened anywhere
Sent such fiery arrows
That they pierced Ravana's compact armour
And drank up the blood within. (85)

He shot down to the ground
The flag which carried the picture of a head
As well as that of a vina
And had on it a bud-like thing
Which could brush against a cloud and bring
down rain. (86)

9. A bad sign astrologically, particularly to those of the Ishvaku family.

As Ravana's bows were getting ferver
To diminish the distress of the gods,
Garuda whose girth was as immeasurable
As the seas' when they gather at Dissolution
Came and sat near Rama's flag
To stabilise the different directions. (87)

When that incomparable one
Who could easily circle the sea-girt earth
Came and sat as Rama's flag,
The gods felt, "We needn't fear anymore
Because the angry Garuda is here." (88)

Then that sinner bent on evil
Seeing that the shafts he sent against Rama
Were powerless against him
Decided to send against him ---
The Lord whom only the wise know ---
The evil missile called *taamatam.*[10] (89)

That missile was made up of many arrows,
Some fire-faced, some blood-soaked,
Some like gods, some like devils,
And some like striped serpents
Creeping into their holes. (90)

Stretching from one quarter to its opposite,
Showing its teeth at both ends;
Huge, capable of doing
Whatever its masters wanted;
Able to gobble up the men and the moon; (91)

Darkness in one quarter, the hot sun in another;
Whirlwind in one, rain in another;
A wheel in one, thunder in another;
Delusion in one, stones in another; (92)

---

10. Darkness, from Sanskrit *tamas*.

When this happened and all seven worlds
Were in the grip of dense darkness;
The gods crying and the world caught in evil,
Rama ever working in the right way (93)

Thought of the deadly missile of Siva
And discharged it: and that weapon
In an instant destroyed that other
As waking puts an end to dreams. (94)

When his wide-spread missile was destroyed
Eyes darting fire, lips pouting
Ravana sent against Rama
His own cruel arrows vulture-feathered
And seeing them stick, made a big noise! (95)

With a big noise against Rama the pure
He sent that missile the *aasurastra*
Which had destroyed the fame of the gods,
Filled Yamas'[11] stomach with many sweet lives
And frightened Indra himself! (96)

That *aasurastra* which vanquished the gods
Could win against any in any world
And cut through mountains hurled against it.
It went speedily and hit Rama
The god dear to the Brahmins. (96a)

To the delighted hurrahs of the gods
Who stood in fear all around,
Against that *aasurastra*
Which would have gobbled up the world
Rama discharged a fire missile
Which cut it down as a great fire
May destroy a fire in the clouds. (97)

---

11. The god of Death's.

Ravana then discharged in a second
A hundred crores of arrows
Which would never fail in dealing death
Even if Death himself did;
Would drink up all the water in the sea,
Reduce Meru to powder,
Overtake the wind and cross all worlds. (98)

"What dexterity!" said some sages;
"This too is magic, not real shafts,"
Said some others; "Where is the space
For all these arrows?" said still others;
"In no fight before this," said others,
"Did he engage with such vigour." (99)

The first and sole Lord of the Vedas
With a few crescent-shaped arrows
Split in a second all these shafts
Which with their feathers hid the sky
From their big heads to the tip of their tails. (100)

He who, by his rare penances,
Had obtained the greatest benefit
In all the worlds created by Brahma,
Said, "I will use against him now
The mighty missile I have aften used,"
And discharged against Rama Maya's weapon. (101)

Even the gods curled up in terror
At the missile Ravana used
Which could destroy the entire world.
"We are undone," thought the monkey chiefs
And tore away helter-skelter,
And the unique God understood best
What he was now up against. (102)

That weapon which came to destroy
His life on this world borne by Sesha
The doughty- handed will-decked Rama
Countefed with the fell shaft Kandarpa. (103)

"I have a club created by Brahma
Which Hiranya used to subdue this world;
And the Asura Madhu handled.
I will use that to drink up his life,"
Said the Ten-headed and threw it. (104)

Taraka with it had hammered the gods;
It rivalled Meru and Mandara;
Bright like sunshine it could not be rolled
By the entire world in the course of a Yuga
It had smelt the heads of the gods! (105)

It had drunk up the green sea once
And was dripping with water;
It was brighter than the sun;
While all were terrified that it would break
The universe as if it was a mud pot
It came sweeping the sky bare
And terrifying Mandara. (106)

The Lotus-eyed saw that divine club
And discharging against it a missile
Like a lotus bud with a hundred balls
Which even Indra's thousand eyes
Could not have taken in,
Shattered it into a hundred pieces. (107)

"He has shown his might in bowmanship:
Why waste my useless weapons on him?
I will employ my *maayastra*
So that with all his mighty army
He shall die in the field," said Ravana,
Destined himself to die there. (108)

Offering it worship and bowing low
As was his wont to his special god, Siva,
He invoked the appropriate sage[12] and metre,
Fixed the arrow to his bowstring
And discharged that weapon which the ten directions
And the sky could not contain. (109)

When that deluding arrow was shot
All those killed earlier in the war
By the shafts of these two pure men
Arose as if they had regained their lives,
Their huge bodies touching the sky
And raising a dreadful din! (110)

Indrajit and his younger brothers,
The great army chiefs and others
Ministers and countless others
Hid the sky and made a noise
As if they would force down rain! (111)

Kumbhakarna and other groups,
The reserve force and the others killed
Seemed to rise. Elephants, horses,
Chariots and other vehicles
All came and crowded there. (112)

---

12. Every mantra has its presiding rishi and appropriate metre who and which should be invoked and used if it is to be effective.

A thousand great *vellams*, as those who knew said,
A fierce and fiery sea of an army
Which had been earlier killed on the field
Filled the earth and amazed the quarters
As if by a boon granted by Siva! (113)

They went all ways gods and rishis fleeng,
Saying, "You think you have vanquished us?
Killed us? We will show you. Come on, come on!
And called their killers by their names. (114)

As if they were snakes from the underworld
Big demons arose piercing the earth
Their bodies as huge as mountains
And wearing crocodiles for ear-rings---
Too many for this world, fit only for the sky! (115)

Produced by the *maayastra*, enemies to virtue,
With shining weapons in their hands
Making those wilt who pursued the right
And offered sacrifices to Brahma (116)

Twice as strong as those who had died,
Their fangs white like the moon's crescent,
Leaping through magic, large as the sea
With strings of pearls came the Vidyadharas. (117)

Leaping like lions and maned *yalis*
Able to vanquish the world with its borders,
Looking like Dissolution's fire and the sea
They were armed with bright weapons and thunder. (118)

Seeing all this, Rama asked,
"Is this magic or the doing of Fate?
Or the result of the Rakshasa's boons?
Or something else. Tell me if you know".
And Matali replied to him: (119)

"O Raincloud-hued, that Ravana---
His shoulders pierced by the *diggajas'* tusks ---
Is a fool who would sell a needle
To an ironsmith: just worthless chaff!
Indulging in a piece of magic. (120)

'"As your great name if uttered
Will act like a mantra against snake-bite
Curing the disease of birth and its cause ---
Good deeds and bad-so your arrow
Will dispose of this magic!" (121)

Beyond even by Upanishads ---
Considered the crest of the Vedas ---
Rama discharged the *gnaana* missile
Saying, "Whether these are the result
Of boons, of magic or sheer strength,
True or false, make them flee!" (122)

Pursued by that great arrow of knowledge
All the magic disappeared
As the delusions caused by birth
Disappear when true knowledge dawns! (123)

Siva, Vishnu and Brahma
Thought the time had now come
For the thorny Rakshasas' end---
While Ravana scheming the end of all
Took a trident in his hand. (124)

Rama saw that trident
With a sound like a thousand bells
Distressing the gods who saw it
As to what might happen
Sent by that valorous tyrant
In the hope it would wipe out his enemies
With a speed meant to outrun
The eyes of all who saw it. (125)

That burning trident outshore the three fires,[13]
Made the gods run and others with them,
Made itself the sole brightness in the world
And forced every eye to be riveted on it. (126)

"Go", he said, and sent it --- and the gods
Made to shrivel said, "You alone
Can deal with this. No one else.
Lord, you must surely win against this
Death called a trident, gobbling and
cruel-eyed!" (127)

The hero's arrows which could speed
Like a whirlwind, frightening thunder
Were however powerless against it
Like the machinations of thoughtless fools
Against those rishis whose attention
Is always fixed upon him. (128)

The world's bestower sent without cease
Everyone of the divine missiles
But they were all powerless
Like lies and cotton.
He realised that trident's strength
Which was like that of a fierce curse ---
And stood still, not knowing
What he was to do! (129)

"He has forgotten what to do
And given up all opposition",
Said the gods, their fright renewed.
Even Dharma began to shake.
Born as a man he seemed not to know
What he was really---and the trident came
Onwards, frightening everybody. (130)

---

13. Sun, moon and Agni the god of fire.

Bent on destroying, bells jingling, shedding sparks
It hit the chest of Rama, whose anger boiled;
And he, an irate cloud, let out a snort
And it shattered at-once into hundreds of pieces.' (131)

The gods regaining now their lives
Hurrahed, lost their fear and rained flowers;
Leapt and worshipped, and said, "Only you
Can douse the flaming evils yet to come" (132)

Ravana had thought that the trident he flung
Would not return without killing Rama;
But when he saw how it fared at his snort
He felt vanquished, perspired within
And recalled what Vibhishana had said. (133)

"Who is this one who frustrates all my boons
Siva? No. Brahma? No. Vishnu? No.
A great one with accumulated penance?
No. He is too young for that!
Is he then that Primal Being of the Vedas? (134)

"Whoever he be, I will not give up
My ego. Will stand and win. Not retreat.
Will go straight and kill, and only then
Return "he said, and resumed the fight. (135)

Invoking Nirruti[14] mentally
And taking her missile when it came
He fixed it in his deadly bow,
Eyes blood-shot and the world trembling,
And sent it against Rama (136)

Frightening even the world-bearing snake
Serpents came up with crores of hoods and teeth
And countless bodies and mouths, making one feel
That Meru was quite light compared to them. (137)

14. The goddess presiding over the S.W. quarter.

Poison oozing like a sea from each mouth,
Fire shooting from each eye,
White teeth leaving no space up or down
Gleaming in mouths resembling caves; (138)

They came up in a smoke
Making all lives tremble and say,
"This *astra* is bound to bite Rama
And swallow all the world and the sea.
Hasn't the Rakshasa made an end
Of all creation and reduced it to powder? (139)

Rama saw all the mountains
Caught in the mouths of those serpents,
And shot, as if into each of those mouths
The unfailing Garuda missile. (140)

Wherever the snakes went, in whatever form
Garuda went too with wind-fast wings!
Beaks, claws, feathers, skins all of gold
So that all heaven was filled with Garuda birds. (141)

Those countless Garuda birds carried
Fire as it were in their mouths---
So that it seemed that the gods were taking
Lamps in their hands to set fire to Lanka. (142)

Those birds seizing the snakes with their claws
Tearing their heads and gobbling up the gems[15]
Looked as if they were feeding
On lotus stalks with their blossoms. (143)

Even the serpents born by Siva
Were distressed by the wind from Garuda wings;
What need then to say that every snake
Was pained and ran away from place.? (143a)

---

15. Serpents are supposed to carry gems in their heads.

Then Ravana, his heart aflame,
Enraged and breathing fire
Let off arrows like thunder
Which would burn up earth and heaven. (144)

Those fierce arrows meeting Rama's
Were drivan back and entered Ravana,
So that he was now covered
With shafts whose bodies stood as tips! (145)

Fighting against each other as equals
The skills of the one who had lifted Kailasa
Seemed to ebb and depart from him,
While Rama grew in strength and valour. (146)

The true god of the Vedas
Saw the time approaching for the chief of sinners
And shot off one of his heads
With an arrows crescent-shaped. (147)

As in the fight between Meru and Vayu[16]
One of its peaks fell into the sea,
So when Rama's shaft hit Ravana's head
It fell fiery into the water. (148)

All the denizens of heaven
Leapt to the earth, so that Trikuta[17]
Seemed to get disjointed;
Waved their garments upper and lower;
Praised, sang, danced, leaped up
And showed their great regard for Rama. (149)

---

16. The god of wind.

17. The hill on which Lanka was built.

As a life which dies takes birth at once
Because of its past actions
So another head appeared now,
With pouting lips, the past remembered.
Could such a thing have ever happened
But for his unique penance? (150)

Giving rise to a question,
"Was it plucked off or was it not?"
That severed head showing great wrath
Rated Rama with a noise like rain. (151)

The head which had fallen like a scooped-up cliff,
Its eyes discharging poison,
Went swiftly to the sea and drank up its water
Like a thirsty cloud, and started to rate. (152)

Enraged at being beheaded,
He who made a noise like thunder[18]
Discharged fourteen arrows on the shoulders
Of Rama, the first vowel of the alphabet. (153)

Rama, the one with a permanent discus,
Realised that there was a boon
Which replaced a cut-off head,
And brought down to the floor
The wretch's arm holding a moon-shaped bow, (154)

When the victorious shaft sliced it
Another came and caught the bow in it.
Who could tell that the new arm
Was not the old one which had been sliced? (155)

Wishing to bring down Rama's charioteer
Ravana hurled the severed hand at him
Which had held a bow like lightning
With one whose forearm bristled with joy! (156)

18. The literal meaning of the name Ravana.

When his chest was hit with that doughty hand
By the Rakshasa with his diamond sword,
Matali felt a great agony
And wilted, blood issuing from his mouth. (157)

He who had secured a sword from Siva
Which owed its sharpness to no file
By singing the *kamara*[19], decided to fling
A *tomara*[20] at Matali with his tree-like hand! (158)

"Matali's life is finished today",
Thought he as he flung that fiery *tomara;*
But the expert bowman shot against it
A five-faced arrow, reducing it to smithereens! (159)

The Lord of wisdom shot a thousand arrows
Dexterously and without cease
As each sliced head sprouted a hundred,
Making them all roll on the ground. (160)

Those many heads fell with a noise like thunder
In the waves of the sea and on the land,
On mountains and in every quarter,
On every spot which one could see. (161)

They assailed the mountains and split them;
They crowded the sky and made the stars stagger;
They entered the seas and left no place
For the fish, drinking up the water. (162)

When the results of good deeds are exhausted
Do not all good things depart?
The devils which formerly went round Ravana
Now in front of him plucked out his eyes! (163)

---

19. A musical mode derived from the Sama Veda.

20. A club or a javelin. Here the latter.

The mighty Ravana, with a noise like thunder.
Flung at Rama all the weapons
His shoulders carried---sword, spear,
Pestle, thunderbolt and club
And death in the form of a hatchet. (164)

When these were flung, the valorous hero
Wondered, "What next? How will I win?"
And decided to pierce the body
Of the Rakshasa with his arrows. (165)

At his chest and shoulders which shamed a cloud,
His eyes and tongues which shamed venom,
He shot his shafts making that cheat's body
A cage for his arrows to roost in! (166)

But those arrows going through
His mouth, his eyes and his chest
Unstained with blood[21] filled the space
On the other side of the world. (167)

The arrows piercing every pore
And putting an end to his breathing,
His hatred and anger ceased for a time,
And weakened and tired he collapsed. (168)

He, who of old used to parade
In the streets of the gods, lay unconscious
In his chariot, the blood from his wounds
Enough to choke all the sharks in the sea! (169)

The gods shouting jumped up and danced;
Sin perspired, wilted, fell down,
His driver seeing that he was exhausted
Taking his chariot back, retired. (170)

---

21. Such was their speed!

When he fell disarmed and senseless,
Rama come to rescue the gods
Nevertheless refrained from attacking him
Aware of what virtue is. (171)

Inciting him Matali said,
"If he recovers, you cannot prevail.
Kill him now when the time serves"---
To which the great hero replied: (172)

"Will it be right, against war's code
To take one's life when one is disarmed,
Unconscious and in distress?
My idea is not to fight now". (173)

Was there one among the Rakshasas
Who were fleeing away in fear
Who did not bow to Rama then?
Then to the terror of countless gods
Ravana recovered! (174)

As if waking after a sleep
The cruel-eyed deceiver
Didn't see Rama before him;
Then looked behind; and eyes shooting fire (175)

Told his charioteer angrily:
"You turned the chariot for the gods to see
And the bowman Rama to laugh at me!
You have made a great mistake. (176)

"Unbearable traitor! Your great wealth
Is due to my protection;
And you have made me look a coward!
Do you now deserve to live" (177)

He rose in wrath, and looking at his sword
Raised it, whereupon the driver
Bowed his head at his feet
And said, "Consider what prompted me
And remit your consuming rage! (178)

"You stopped your heroic fight;
Had I stayed on at that place
Your life, Sir, might have ended that instant.
My action was to save you from danger
As I am your true servant. (179)

"The duty of a charioteer
Is to watch the tiredness or energy
Of the man within; and if death seems certain
To take him away to give relief.
Putting me to the sword will not be proper--
Consider fully and carefully." (180)

Appealed to thus, Ravana relented.
"Take the great car back", he said;
And it went---and from it
The deceitful one facing Rama (181)

Cast crores and crores of fierce arrows
More dreadful than death, and seemed to be
A different Rakshasa, thrice as strong
As the one before, determined to wage
An incandescent war, and all who saw
This happening were frightened. (182)

"Where there is smoke there is fire",
Thought Rama --- "As long as be has a bow
He will not be easy to conquer," and sent
An arrow which belched thunder. (183)

Sending the Narayanastra,[22] Rama
Broke into two the terrible bow
Of him who had conquered the elephants
Which bore on their heads Mother Earth. (184)

When that bow made by Brahma
Was broken by that Narayanastra
And fell down, the gods jumped
Higher and higher, and exclaimed,
"We have gained the fruit of our penance". (185)

One after another Ravana used
A crore of bows, and Rama
Sending his shafts in every direction
Broke them all into pieces. (186)

He who had charged the *diggajas*
And broken their tusks now discharged
Iron pestles, spears, clubs, rods,
Lances, swords, fiery caltrops
As if to displace the Lakshmi on his chest.[23] (187)

Breaking down all of them
And throwing them in a heap in the sea
The faultless one thought within himself,
"All this will not vanquish him"
And pondered what he should do. (188)

"Considering that these arrows
Sharper than the minds of the wise
And move numerous than sea - sands
Entered his eye balls, the wounds in his body
And yet could do nothing, of him,
What is to be done?" he thought. (189)

---

22. My rendering; subject to correction.

23. Rama being Vishnu's avatara.

The noble one, determined to kill him,
Thought, "I will employ the *astra*
Of Brahma who rose from Narayana's stomach
Against the chest of this sinner." (190)

He took the missile of that Primal Creator,
Offered it worship, fixed it in his bow,
And drawing the string up to his shoulder
Which resembled Mandara, let it fly! (191)

That *astra* created before Tripura was burnt
Which had pierced those trees and killed Vali
Was now discharged by the Sun's descendant
Against Ravana, the super-defiant. (192)

Sent by Rama after the mantra
Sacred to Brahma was invoked,
It went with its four heads
And a force and a speed with which
Neither fire nor wind could have kept pace. (193)

A great blaze sweeping the darkness
And making the sun of Dissolution
A mere glowworm compared with it
Went beyond the chakravala mountain
And the outermost of all the seas! (194)

The Brahmastra then taking the help
Of Vishnu's discus entered the heart
Of that sinner; and the earth,
The sky and all the quarters whirled. (195)

The sacred shaft which Rama sent
Entering the chest of Ravana
Put an end to his three crore years,
His strenuous penance, Brahma's boon
That no god would be able to vanquish him,
And the strength which had conquered all the worlds
And every single direction.
It drank his life and departed. (196)

While the gods, the Brahmins and the rishis
Shouted and blessed and showered flowers,
It went to the milky ocean
And bathed in its purifying waters.
Then flying across the mountainous chariot
And the sea of blood of Ravana
It joined its fell companions
In the quiver of that dark mountain, Rama. (197)

The peak of the Rakshasa mountain range
  Who had stood steadfast in battle
Fell face down from his chariot
  Gems and jewels rolling down
His broad chest and his forest of shoulders
  Like thunder rolling from a dark cloud,
And fire and smoke mixed with the blood
  Which issued from his eyes. (198)

His anger like a fierce lion's stilled
  His mind stilled, his schemes stilled,
His hands against his enemies stilled
  His love and energy stilled
The lifeless faces of that sinner shone
  Three times as bright now
As in the days he had rendered still
  The sages and those who defied him. (199)

Told to take down that lovely chariot
Matali did so;
And Rama the beautiful breeder of virtue
Saw stretched on the ground
Ravana in a stream of blood
As if the love within him
Had taken its appropriate colour
And ran down all in red! (200)

"Take the chariot back to heaven",
Said Rama to Matali,
And dismissing him walked on the ground
With his brother and the army chiefs.
The Lord of Lakshmi saw before him
One who never in a fight
Turned his back, and scanned with pleasure
Every part of his body. (201)

On him who lay dead on that field
The evil in his heart destroyed
Brought down by the shafts from the hero's bow
Whose hand guarded the earth,[24]
Countless monkeys climbed as if
They were ascending a mountain
And danced on his head, his shoulders and back
And his hands lying stretched out. (202)

---

24. An alternative reading adopted by the Kazhakam edition should be translated.

What proof do we need of the meanness of wealth
Inconstant like a courtesan
Flitting like a figure drawn on water
That even on the great Ravana
Countless monkeys........

He saw his back bearing the tusks
Of the *diggajas*
As if it had been ploughed with them,
The tusks like crescents
While round them were the scars left
Like the stains on the moon---
Garlands of flowers on either side
With bees sucking them. (203)

The Lotus-eyed looking at his wounds,
His wrath on Sita's account torn up
Like the arrogant Ravana's body,
Gave a deprecating smile
Thinking how they minimised his victory. (204)

"He vanquished indeed the three worlds
But my victory over him
Is somewhat diminished because
It's over an enemy fleeing
As the scars on his back reveal. (205)

"There was a saying that he had been bound
By Kartaviryarjuna;
That made me feel ashamed.
And now I see with my own eyes
The wounds on a fleeing enemy's back
Let alone the tale of Siva's abode.[25] (206)

"Vibhishana, my enemies who love to eat
Will eat up, with contempt, my repute too
As the credit for riddings the world of Ravana
Will not really belong to me.
He was a coward, turning his back
A win over such is really a defeat!" (207)

---

25. Which he lifted (to his glory), hit which crushed him (to his shame). But that crushing being God-inflicted may be ignored as not really shameful.

When Vibhishana heard that,
Eyes raining tears, heart wilted, sighing
He said, "Sir, you mustn't be unfair"
And nigh lifeless spoke thus: (208)

"It was by the curse of the gods
That the thousand-shouldered and Vali
Won their victories dearly over him.
This is the truth. But for his love---
An infatuation for one who deserved
To be worshipped like a mother ---
And your wrath, could anyone
However renowned have prevailed against him? (209)

"Going to the ends of the earth
And finding no more foes to conquer
He attacked the mountainous *diggajas*
Who plunged their tusks to their limits in him.
Those mark have been left by those tusks.
What are an enemy's weapons to him? (210)

"Those ivories were ornaments on his chest;
Later a fight in heaven against Yama
To the loud noise of a conch
Where he used his doughty arrows,
And Hanuman's terrible punch
Pushed them into his back. (211)

"Except for these marks, my Lord,
Poison may swallow Siva
And snakes approach the king of the birds,
But no weapons on earth outside
Durst get anywhere near him. (212)

"Victorious One, is there anything else?
All creation from Him whose boar-fangs
Rescued once this sea-girt earth
Is asking, 'When will our sorrows cease'?
And if it is told you have killed him today
Will say, 'It is false' and won't stir out!" (213)

"Is that so?" said Rama, his shame removed;
Looked at his shoulders and said to Vibhishana,
"Death must end all enmity ---
Do for him the rites prescribed". (214)

Saying that he went to see
All the gods from every world
Who had come, relieved of their sorrows,
Shouting and falling before him ---
And Vibhishana did this. (215)

The hero in his mercy had said,
"The mean deeds of the Rakshasa
Should now all be forgotten.
You who are alive must perform
The obsequies that are his due."
And impelled by his love for him
Vibhishana fell on his corpse
One mountain on another. (216)

All creatures in this eternal world
Including the gods and rishis
Feel sorrow in their hearts.
Though he was wise enough to conquer
Both the love and the grief he felt
Nevertheless made a loud lament
Not suppressing but expressing them. (217)

"O brother! brother! of measureless might
A typhoon to the Titans, death to the gods!
Do you today at last take note
Of what I told you when I left you?
No venom kills unless consumed
But that great venom Sita
Had but to be seen to kill you!
And now you, even you, lie dead in the field! (218)

"'A thoughtless love for a chaste woman
The very life of another man
Will breed endless shame', I said,
You were wroth with me. Are you wiser now?
Is your lust subdued which has ruined the race
Which rose because its sport was war?
O You, whose knitted brows could once
Displace the elephants in their quarters! (219)

"O you, with shoulders high as hills,
I warned you that this, the mother of the world
Was Vedavati who before now
Had burnt herself to escape you.
You took no heed, and even though
Your furious kin were killed in the war
Would not make peace--- and now are dead!
Have you learnt now of Rama's strength? (220)

"The boons confired by the Lotus-seated
And by Siva with his hatchet
Have like your ten heads
Turned to dust and blown away!
You did not know his strength then.
But at least now, having reached his land
Have you at length realised
That Rama is the God of all? (221)

"Have you gone to Valhalla?
Or your grandfather Brahma's land?
Or the crescent-crested Siva's?
Who, brother, unafraid
Has taken you to his abode?
Say, above all, has Kama
Stopped you dancing the tarantella?
And has the moon now ceased to burn? (222)

"Your sister bit her lip and swore
Revenge for her husband's death
Which you had caused in ignorance.
The earth has bled to soothe her ire!
All hate us now, the good and the bad,
Hell and heaven. They are all our foes.
Whose face do you see, fallen so low? (223)

"Your hands embraced the goddesses
Of war, of learning and of fame;
But when they wanted to embrace
The goddess of chastity too ---
That miracle past the guess of gods---
Those goddesses grew jealous and made
You, mad man, exchange your life
For infamy; and with the chest
Which broke the tusks of the *diggajas*
Made you embrace the goddess of dust!" (224)

When Jambavan the king of the bears
Heard him lamenting thus in grief,
He said, "Hill-shouldered, are you too
One who will not respect Fate?
How can you be thus aggrieved?"
And Vibhishana recovering himself
Stood aside --- while Maya's daughter
The long-eyed beauty came and heard
What had happened to the Rakshasa. (225)

Countless lakhs of Rakshasa maids
Their hair unbound, and wailing aloud
Coming with her, she arrived
Her husband never outside her thoughts. (226)

The loud noise those Rakshasis made
Was like the scandal which spreads wide
When a man born in a family
Known for mercy and charity
Does something which is disgraceful. (227)

Their anklets of two kinds weeping and wailing
Many came crowding out of the gateways;
While others said, "Indra's foe is dead",
And died and proceeded to heaven. (228)

Some came down like clouds from the sky
Their cries thunder, their beauty lightning,
Their flashing jewels like the rainbow,
The tears from their gazelle eyes
Unceasing torrents of raindrops. (229)

Hands on heads, faces drooping,
Tears flowing over their breasts,
They swarmed like swans on the waves of a sea.
Fell on his mountainous shoulders and fainted. (230)

Those Rakshasis in groups and singly
Clasped and clasped his heads, his legs,
His high shoulders, his chest, his all,
Wept and lost consciousness. (231)

They who spent all their days
Sulking coyly or in love's embrace
Fell on each other and clasped him ---
His shoulders the sacred shrine of Valour. (232)

Yakshinis, Rakshasis, Naga maidens,
Siddha girls not easy to catch,
Vidyadharis all in their love
Embraced him with a new fervour
And lost their consciousness (233)

"Have you still not forgotten
The Sita whom you enclosed in your heart
Against all propriety?
You will not open your flower-mouth to us?
You will not see us? Show us grace?
Are you dead indeed?" they wailed. (234)

Maya's daughter falling down
On his strong and powerful chest
Like lightning on a rolling sea
Opened her mouth and lamented
So as to melt even trees and rocks. (235)

"Alas! Alas! What a dreadful fate
That I should survive the Titan
And forgo my firm resolve!
Are these his crowns and heads lying here?
Are these his faces lying prone?
Is this his end, the wages of his sin? (236)

"Did one fell arrow pierce the frame
Which had shaken the hill on which Siva sat
Groping to see in each nook
Up and down leaving no spot
If love of Sita still hid there? (237)

"How have those arrows opened his chest
Wide as a ditch, and shot far beyond!
Defeated, cowed his might and boons gone
He fell at last, and I am undone.
Could a single shaft suck Ravana's life?
Is this what a mere man can do? (238)

"How many things have conspired together
To crown and reward Indra's penance!
The beauty of that gem among women;
Her chastity; Ravana's high-handed lust:
The severed nose of Surpanaka;
And Dasaratha's promise which drove
Those Princes to do penance in the forest! (239)

"I was deceived and thought that one
Stronger than the gods and the *diggajas*
Than Brahma, Vishnu and Siva
Could never die. I did not think
That there was a man who would confront
The ocean of your penance and the safety
Your boons had secured for you. (240)

"Deluted by the might of your penance
I thought that there could never be
Any harm to your prescribed life
Of three and a half crore years
And the strength of your muscle none could measure.
Alas, that I could not see
That the milky ocean of your boons
Will all be curdled up one day
By the rennet called Sita! (241)

"Who can understand this world?
The terror of fourteen of them
Has left his body and gone to heaven.
He was the target of the God of Love
Whose flower arrows from a sugarcane bow
Hit all his shoulders all day long
Which were finally brought down by a man! (242)

"I knew Rama for Narayana
The unsating nectar on the milky ocean;
You thoughtlessly abducted his wife ---
Will you now see what has happened to your chest? (242a)

So she cried loud and in deep anguish
Embraced his well-adorned chest
With her tendril hands, stood aside,
Called out his name, sighed deep and died. (243)

Heavenly nymphs, Vidyadharis,
Those from the nether world, rishis' wives,
And the chaste women of this earth ---
All of them praised her. (244)

Then Vibhishana invoking Agni
Observing the Vedic rites
With a heavy heart put his great brother
On the funereal faggots. (245)

Laying his great and beautiful body
On akhil and sandalwood
To the sound of conches
Drowning every other noise (245a)

With the royal umbrella and flags,
Women following as prescribed
The great hero offered Ravana
Whatever was due to him. (245b)

Shedding more tears than water in the pots
He completed all the rites
And putting Maya's daughter with him
Offered them both to the flames. (246)

For others too he performed
All due rites, gave fire and water,
Earning the praise, "There is none like him,"
And repaired to victorious Rama. (247)

And Rama told his adoring friend,
"Wise one, give up your sorrow ---
Such is ever the way it goes,"
And removed his endless burden. (248)

37. RELEASE AND RETURN

"Don't grieve", said Rama to Vibhishana
Whose great penances had brought him to him,
"You so well-versed in Manu's code"
And said to the ascetic Lakshmana: (1)

"Go with Sugriva and Hanuman
And the other monkey heroes
And crown this righteous one King
According to the code prescribed by God". (2)

When he said that, and let
Lakshmana and the others go,
The gods with the *dikpalakas*[1]
Went to help in their different ways. (3)

The gods now restored to their status
Brought water from the seas and rivers,
Numerous crowns and a throne
And other necessay things. (4)

Ordered by Brahma the stag-faced Maya
Put up a dazzling gem-set hall
With gold and jewels, greatly admired
By Siva and the other gods. (5)

The gods bathed him in sacred waters
According to the Vedic injunctions
And the lion-cub Lakshmana as ordered by Rama
Crowned Vibhishana with his own hands. (6)

1. The guardian deities of the eight quarters.

As if a dark hill wearing the sun
Was seated on a gem-set plank
The victorious King of Lanka
Sat on his throne, all his kin
Around him shouting with joy. (7)

The gods, Siddhas and others
Rained flowers in their love,
While the great Trinity and the rishis
Rained down words of blessing. (8)

The crowned Rakshasa leader
Bowed to Lakshmana and did him honours;
And after that told in a loud voice
Anala[2] who was with him: (9)

"You with shoulders which will shame the hills
Look after Lanka with confidence
Until I come back", and left
To join Rama and fall at his feet. (10)

When the Rakshasa King touched his feet
With Sugriva and Angada
Rama seized and embraced him
And told him the following. (11)

"O Matchless one in your virtue
Rule your kingdom in such a way
As to win the three worlds' respect.
Walk ever in the path of the gods
Law and morality and so obtain
The treasures of here and hereafter". (12)

---

2. Adopting the Kazhakam and Swaminatha Aiyar's suggestion in preference to Gopalakrishnamachariar's Lakshmana.

This he said, who so faithfully
Carried out his mother's orders,
Repeated many good maxims
And added, "Famous One, may you
Live happily with your Kinsmen,"
And then looked at Hanuman. (13)

These things settled he now thought
Of the things which yet remained
And said to Hanuman, "Go and tell
That coral-lipped peacock what has happened." (14)

Bowing, the deathless Hanuman
Went to the grove where Sita was
And gave that lovely one the news
Which was like water to a withering sprig. (15)

"Hooray, hooray! I bring great news!
Sad days are over, glad days are here!
The Aryan elephant has crushed underfoot
That huge sea-monster who was a terror to all!" (16)

He named great names, sang and danced,
Jumped from one side to the other
His palms were joined on his head
His shoulders towered high as hills. (17)

"Like the mountains which hold up the earth
Were his heads lying on the battle field.
His jewelled shoulders rolled on the ground
Like the sea. His body lay stock-still. (18)

"Thanks to Rama's stern command
And the grace of good Vibhishana
All women were spared, but except these
Not one of the others has survived." (19)

Hearing those ambrosial words
So welcome, she waxed all at once
Radiant, spotless like a moon
That in one night grows from new to full.[3] (20)

Like a full-blown lily her mouth and face;
A greater burden to her slender waist
Her two breasts swelled with joy and love ---
A snow white moon from the serpent freed! (21)

Which swelled most is a question to ask ---
The joy upsurging in her heart,
Or he shoulders which found her jewels too tight,
Or her breasts, or her waist that dispersed her clothes. (22)

Her beauteous brows were bent; her breasts
Swelled, were wet with dewy drops;
She thought one thing, babbled another ---
Drunk with joy as if with toddy. (23)

Stainless, a model to all the world
Of what a wedded wife should be;
She gazed at Hanuman long and dumb
Not knowing what to say or how. (24)

"Is it", he asked," that boundless joy
Has made you think, 'What shall I say?'
Or do you doubt my words?" he queried ---
The wise messenger to whom she said, (25)

---

3. Like a moon which is a single night
Grows from new to full, with its stag and all

according to **Namakkal Ramalingam**, setting right the unnatural state which **Kaikeyi**'s action had ushered when she wiped out the **auspicious** spot on her forehead by causing her husband's death!

"Whelmed by that great flood of joy
That knows no higher water-mark,
I search and search in vain for words ---
Does sudden fortune make one mad? (26)

"'I will release you', you said then ---
You *have* released me now, brought joy.
What great reward should I give you for this?
Lost in that thought I failed to speak. (27)

"O worthy one, I thought at first
Of all three worlds as recompense;
But they are nothing and transient ---
With my head at your feet I must worship you. (28)

"Hence it is that helpless I
Stood in thought as to what to do.
O priceless gem so finey chased,
Rare messenger -- you tell me now." (29)

"My Lady, rare peacock from heaven!
What greater thing can you give me
Than the joy I will feel when I restore you
To your great happiness to your husband?" (30)

He said, and added, "Dear Mother,
Except Trijata a pure gem
With a face like a flower, I should like
To torture all these Rakshasis. (31)

"They spoke to you unbecoming words;
Fell on you, threatened to eat you up.
I will tear their mountainous bodies
With my sharp nails, and yield them to Yama. (32)

"I will pluck their entrails, drink their blood
Twist their bodies and eat them up."
And when he said this those fat Rakshasis
Cried, "Mother, your refugees, we will cling to you!" (33)

"Don't fear, don't fear", said Sita to them;
And looking at Hanuman's great face
Said, "Pure one, what wrong did they do
Except as ordered by him their master? (34)

"O you, whose love is dearer than a mother's
This distress was all the result
Of my own past. They were not crueller
Than Kuni of old. Do not make much
Of what is dead and done with! (35)

"Grant me this favour. Do not hurt
These ignorant ones who have sheltered evil,"
Said she the beauty of whose face
Made the moon look spotted! (36)

Hanuman heard that and said,
"As per your grace, my Lord's Lady!"
And bowed, And meanwhile Rama
Said to Vibhishana, "Let our lady
Well adorned be brought here!" (37)

Whereupon Vibhishana
Ordered to bring her quickly ---
A veritable combination
Of the sun, darkness and lightning ---
Went to the grove where Sita was
And fell prostrate at her feet. (38)

"Our wishes", he said, "have been fulfilled.
Rama is eager to see you.
The gods too have arrived.
Bid farewell of your sorrows, Lady.
Wear your ornaments quickly
And come with me as bidden by Rama" (39)

"It is good, Sir, that the gods, our King
The sages and the heavenly maids
Living according to their high standards
Should see me as I have been.
It is not right I should appear otherwise" (40)

Said she. But the Rakshasa King
Replied, "This is Rama's order";
And Sita said, "Very well",
And agreed to change, and the heavenly nymphs
Tilottama and others gathered to help. (41)

Menaka, Rambha and Urvasi
And all the other heavenly maids
Brought scented oils and unguents
To bathe the one who had given up eating! (42)

The seed-plot of womanhood, the jewel of chastity,
The touchstone of gold, the nectar of nectar
The mother of virtue had her hair dressed,
Its tangles combed out gently by Rambha
As the Veda's tangles caused by time
Were smoothed and set right by God almighty! (43)

The heavenly nymphs brushed her teeth
Behind her sweet ambrosial lips
Red as coral, removing from it
All the tartar accumulaled,
Put scented oil on her hair,
Removed all the dirt on her
As a whetstone cleans an encrusted gem,
And bathed her singing joyously
Vedic benedictions. (44)

They put white sandal paste on her body ---
Milk foam on a coral creeper ---
Saffron paste on her breasts,
A dark sari for her to wear
And a waistlet fondling her winsome middle. (45)

Necklaces of gold and pearls like stars
Fit to adorn Indra's consort
They put round her neck, and painted her lips
With the red juice of betel nuts.
They also went round her with a plate
Of saffron water with rice grains in it
And secured her against evil eyes
By putting a dot upon her forehead. (46)

Putting her in the aerial car ---
A fawn in the moon ---
Surrounded by the heavenly nymphs,
The monkeys and the Rakshasas
In concentric circles,
The great Vibhishana took her
To Rama, Lord of the worlds. (47)

Gathered together, singing hosannas
Were gods, rishis and their wives,
Coral-lipped Vidyadharis
And others in a heap
In their numbers exceeding
All those in the three worlds! (48)

They crowded round that jewel
Leaving no space before or behind
And the Rakshasas then using their sticks
Created a commotion like the sea's. (49)

Thereupon Rama, lotus-faced.
Annoyed wanted to know the cause
Of the uproar, and the innocent Rishis
Told him truthfully the cause. (50)

Immediately on hearing their words
His lips quivering with anger
He said of Vibhishana, "Have you
So learned in the Vedas ordered this wrong? (51)

"The gods and the others have come here
From far distances to see this field
Where this fearful war took place.
Who ordered that, when they were happy,
They should be treated so severely?
Tell me, you, so learned in the codes. (52)

"Will Siva. Vishnu or Brahma ---
Not to speak of others ---
Move round without their wives?
If innumerable gods and others
Have come to see me, crowding in,
Is it right to force them back? (53)

"Therefore, King of the Rakshasas,
It is not right for you to forbid
These good people," said he, red-eyed.
And the good Vibhishana felt unhappy,
Sighed deep and trembled, being both
In mind and heart innocent. (54)

The maiden chaste as Arundhati
Saw the field, and with fondness
Her lord in his accoutrements
Who had provided such a feast
For the eagles, vultures and the devils,
And her eyes and heart exulting, said: (55)

"Will my chastity ensure
Eternal life to the monkey
Who helped to blazon my good conduct,
My husband's valour and my high descent
And preserve the worlds' stability? (56)

"My body dirt, my life departed;
I have no desires now", thought she
Who was wholly without spot
Looking at the bowman in front
Green-hued and coral-lipped. (57)

Circled by the heavenly nymphs
She descended from the car
To show her face to Rama,
Her body seeking reunion
With the life she had parted from so long! (58)

"I have seen him at last-- my mate
Whether in life or when I leave
This dire distress which is called life.
No matter now whether I forget
Or die", she said, her yearnings ended. (59)

That chief too looked steadily
At the queen of chastity, the guardian of womanhood,
The beauty of beauty, the life of fame
The symbol of mercy even when she
Was not in his vicinity. (60)

Tears from her long eyes
Wetting her breasts like a river,
She, a peacock, the life of chastity
Was eyed by him as by an angry serpent! (61)

"You stayed content in that sinner's city
Enjoying your food and drink;
Your conduct was gone but you would not die;
What dared you think, coming here?
That I would be glad to have you back? (62)

"I did not come to Lanka
Bridging the sea, uprooting the Rakshasas
With their shining weapons, and then
Destroying all my enemies
In order to rescue you!
It was but to rescue myself
From the blame of sparing my wife's abductor. (63)

"You ate the flesh dear to the animals
To which it belonged; drank toddy;
And lived. Do you propose to feed
Us too with them? Tell me, loveless! (64)

"The good in you which should have shone
Like gems set in ornaments
Has all gone, You were not born
In a good family --- but like a worm
Took your birth in the earth! (65)

"Womanhood, dignity and high birth,
The strength of chastity, good conduct,
A clear head, propriety and truth
Have all because of your single birth
Been destroyed, like the fame of a King
Devoid of generosity. (66)

"Women from a good family
Separated from their husbands
Will control their five senses;
Make good conduct their axle-pin;
Not comb their hair, living like ascetics;
And should any blame come to them
Wipe it out with their lives. (67)

"What shall I say? Your bad conduct
Cuts into pieces my peace of mind
Die --- if you won't, go where you wish"
Said he, who resides in wise men's minds! (68)

The sages, the gods and the numerous women,
All the many Rakshasas,
All the monkeys and all others
Broke into a loud lament. (69)

She who resides in the lotus
Her looks bent on the earth,
Feeling as if a wound had been probed
With a stick, shed blood and tears
And sighed deep, nearly dead. (70)

She was a fawn in a wilderness of vultures
Dying of thirst and seeing a tank
But unable to get near it
Feeling both perplexed and helpless. (71)

She looked around tears streaming from her eyes
Long and streaked, and said to herself,
"This, I suppose, is what I have earned
By my past good deeds", and said to Rama, (72)

"Hanuman came and told me
That you would be coming here.
Did he not, the best of messengers,
Tell you how I lived? Or was he
Not your messenger at all? (73)

"All my penances, good deeds and chastity
Of all these days seem to have proved
But meaningless, like a mad man's deeds
Having in no way impressed your mind! (74)

"A model wife for all the world
Whose mind even Brahma cannot change---
If the eye of all the world
Poor me! Cannot see this, which God can help? (75)

"Brahma, Siva and Vishnu
May see all things plain as a pikestaff---
But who in this world can claim to know
What passes through a woman's mind? (76)

"To whom therefore shall I declare
My unspotted chastity?
There is nothing better for me than death.
That too is your order and my fate". (77)

She called Lakshmana and told him,
"Light a fire", her bangles jingling.
Distressed Lakshmana looked at Rama
Who said the same thing with his eyes! (78)

Half-dead, eyes streeming with tears
Lakshmana prepared a fire
As prescribed for such an act---
And the lotus-footed walked to the fire. (79)

When that mother even of the gods
Approached the fire, all things alive,
The four Vedas and ceaseless Dharma
Unable to bear it cried out loud! (80)

When she circled the fire, all the worlds
And their creatures from heaven down
Whirled around and cried out,
"Sir, this anger is not right". (81)

All the women from Indra's wife
Cried out from the heaven above;
Beat with their red tendril hands
Their lovely eyes and shivered all over. (82)

Brahma and the other gods trembled;
Adisesha withdrew his hood;
The world grew hot as if it was
The venom which he had spat out;
The planets changed places; the seas wailed loud! (83)

Her breasts and hands adorned with gold
She called out to the God of Fire---
"If in word or thought I have erred
Burn me in your righteous wrath!"
Saying which she bowed to Rama. (84)

Forthwith into that fire she plunged
As if into her palace lotus-pool;
And the flames went white like cotton burning
In the fierce blaze of her chastity! (85)

Then Agni arose, two hands clasped on head,
And two more raising that lady submerged,
His body scorched sore, crying for help
To Rama, the Veda's essence and crown. (86)

The sweat her husband's ire had caused
Still lay on her; the bees on her chaplet
Were still humming---what further proof?
The flowers she had worn she wore still
Moist and cool, and with an added lustre! (87)

The whirling worlds stood steady again;
Creation melting lost its fear;
The sages' wives with Arundhati
Threw shame aside, and danced unchecked! (88)

"Though I am faultless", the god complained,
"Whom none had ever any reason to blame
Me, too regardless, you have quelled
With the divine fire of her chastity". (89)

"Who are you?" burst Rama forth
That speak to me out of that fire
Guarding instead of burning that trull?
By whose advice. tell me, is this?" (90)

"The god of Fire I seek refuge
From the fiercer fire of her chastity
You, witness eternal, having seen
What you have seen, still stand in doubt? (91)

"Troths are plighted in my presence;
Women suspected swear by me;
The purity of things *I* test ---
The Vedas, Strong One, vouch for me. (92)

"You set at naught true Hanuman's words.
Will you listen to me who am
The test, the ordeal which ends all doubts
And makes all things plain as a pikestaff? (93)

"Didn't you hear the gods and the sages,
All things moving and unmoving,
The three worlds banging their eyes and crying?
Abandoning virtue, where did you
Manage to pick up this sin? (94)

"Will the clouds rain, earth bear and not split?
Will virtue walk its wonted way?
Will the world live on if she is wroth?
Brahma on his lotus by her curse will die!" (95)

The flaming one feeling hot
Said all this, and the gods and the world
Shouting and standing up
Brought the lady to Rama
Who thereupon spoke as follows: (96)

"You are the upright witness of the world.
You have said in words of high praise
That she is faultless. That absolves her.
She shall not be discarded",
Said he the merciful! (97)

Brahma four faced, lotus-seated,
Requested by the gods to enlighten Rama
Caught in the illusions common to men
As the time for this had now come
Got ready to do so. (98)

"Listen to this, Rama. You took birth
In an ancient and royal family.
But do not think that you are just a man.
You are Vedanta's ultimate Truth
And besides you, great one, there is none other. (99)

"Prakriti, the oldest of things,
And vikriti its off-spring
And above it the *jivaatma*
Whcih is rare to realise---
All these, Rama, are yourself.
The wide-spread world, the great illusion,
Is what *you* have created. (100)

"The Vedas without beginning or end
Have as their crown the Upanishads;
And what the Upanishads declare
The Supreme One, the end and aim
Is only you and no one else. (101)

"Those who realise that you
Are superior to everyone ---
I, Siva, Indra, the sages
And all living things will escape
The bonds caused by their own deeds
From whose clutches it is hard to escape. (102)

"All the beings from me down
Are lost in the illusion of father and mother
In birth after birth; don't realise themselves
And feel frustrated. Those who escape
This illusion and know you for their father
Sow the seed of liberation. (103)

"The great Vedas will declare
That higher than the twentyfive *tatwas*[4]
Are yourself --- to which will witness
All creation. And that must be final
Because no one demands a witness for a witness! (104)

"There are no measures, Basil-crowned!
By which to measure you and to say
'He is' or 'He is not' The Upanishads
After much searching cannot by reason
Establish you. But they claim to have seen you
And that is enough for their saying, 'You are!' (105)

"To those who have not won your grace
The organs of sense are a great impediment
To know you, and to cross them hard.
So they wallow in the delusion
Of death and birth. To escape that
Their only refuge is your feet. (106)

"You have no birth. The powerful *prakriti*
Is born of you. And out of it come
The air and the other elements
All of which at Dissolution
Disintegrate and disappear
While you yourself will endure for ever! (107)

4. True principles. "In the Samkhya philosophy, *avyakta*, *buddhi*, *ahamkara*, the five *tanmatras*, the five *mahabhutas*, the eleven organs including *manas*, and lastly *purusha* (Monier-Williams).

"All by yourself you create me
That I may create this world
Which fleets away like lightning;
And in order to establish Dharma.
Then you reveal the end of all
Including me. Even to me
You will not reveal yourself
Nor yet wholly conceal yourself
Because of what the Vedas say. (108)

"You make this world in my form;
Enter it in yours and preserve it;
Then destroy it in the form of Siva---
Like the sun who visibly causes
Day, noon and night, O primal one! (109)

"We were inflated with our wealth
And the Titans and the Rakshasas took down our pride
By making us flee in cruel wars;
Then depressed and weakened we sought your help.
You entered wombs unworthy of you[5]
Only for our sake, why should you have? (109a)

Those who understand 'Om' will know you;
Knowing 'Om' they will be rid of this world;
Those who doubt its significance
Are destined to suffer life perpetual! (110)

"This being so, do not without need
Show your wrath against our mother
Who created us and the three worlds
And is a model housewife",
Said in conclusion the one
Who sprang from Vishnu and brought forth
The world, its attachments and divisions. (111)

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5. Like those of a fish, a tortoise, a boar etc.,

When he said that, Siva too
Said, "Doughty One, you don't seem to know
Who you are in reality
You are the Primordial God
And Sita the mother of the triple worlds
Carried ever on your chest. (112)

"She, Lord, the mother whose great womb
Has borne all these ancient worlds
Is not one to be discarded.
If she is, through your mistake,
Many will die, Give up your suspicion",
Said he, the most beneficent boon-giver. (113)

Thinking further he went and saw
The one who died through the loss of his son
And was now in Vaikuntha,
And said, "Stalwart, go and clear
You son's mind and relieve your sorrow". (114)

The Emperor asked by the first of gods
And eager to see his darling son
Came down to earth; and when he came
The Lord of the Vedas fell at his feet. (115)

He raised his son clasped him tight
To his chest, broad as a mountain,
Bathed him in the tears from his eyes
And, his heart gladdened now,
Poured out to him his miseries past. (116)

"The boons granted to Kaikeyi that day
A veritable spear which pierced my heart
Stuck to it even after killing me
And has left me at last only now
Drawn by the magnet of your chest---
A great gem which attracts all! (117)

"Handsome Shoulders, you have made by your deeds
All fathers who have reached heaven
Less than the dust of my feet.
I have gained high heaven and great fame. (118)

"See how the gods and the rishis
I worshipped in the olden days
Now salute me with clasped hands.
You have raised me to a sphere
High above, along with Brahma." (119)

With that the doughty-shouldered one
Whose fame defied description
Clasped his son again and again
And went to Sita, and when she
Fell at his feet embraced her fondly. (120)

"Dear Girl", he said, "don't take to heart
His asking you to enter fire
To prove your chastity to the world
Do not be angry with Kosala's Lord. (121)

"It is good to realise that gold
Is tested in fire to prove its purity;
This was the time, he must have thought,
To prove to the world you are the queen of chastity. (122)

"You, the jewel of womanhood
Reckoning from Arundhati on
Are the daughter of the Earth
And descended from heaven.
Nothing can stain your countless qualities." (123)

He said this and was happy
That that lovely one didn't harbour
Any anger in her heart
Then, full of love, and eyes streaming
He embraced Lakshmana as if himself. (124)

The tears form his eyes flooding Lakshmana's hair
Like water draining after a bath
He said, embracing him, "My son,
You have removed the wound in my heart
And many births for yourself
By going to the forest with your brother. (125)

"Many gods are for ever praising
Your strength which overcame Indrajit.
You put an end to the foes of this world
And established Dharma here." (126)

Then he said to Rama,
"Ask me for something I can give you"---
To which he replied, "I had hoped
To see you in heaven and end my sorrow.
I have seen you here. What more do I need?" (127)

"Even so, ask me for some thing fit",
Said he, to which the lovely one said,
"Grant that my goddess the one you discarded
As a sinner and Bharata
Should be my mother and my brother"---
And all those living who heard this
Rose up and cheered, praising him (128)

"Hear, generous one", said Dasaratha,
"Let faultless Bharata benefit by this
But my anger can never cease
Against that sinner who deprived you
Of your crown, and made you an ascetic".
And the hands clasping Rama grew slack. (129)

"Was it not I who made a mistake
In taking on the great responsibility
Of ruling a kingdom, rather than she,
My dear mother, who saved me from it?"
Asked Rama, and Dasaratha lost his anger. (130)

When Rama said that who seemed to know
How to deal with each kind of boon,[6]
The gods said with feeling, "With two boons
Kaikeyi sent him to a wood full of foes
And with two boons Rama has benefited her!" (131)

Granting those boons he who had
Given up his life to maintain his word
And gained fame therby in heaven and earth
Left Rama, Lakshmana and Sita
And hied in a big chariot to heaven. (132)

When the gods said to the bowman Prince,
"Ask of us what boons you want",
He replied, "Let those monkeys rise
Whom the Rakshasas killed in that fearful war. (133)

"And one more boon; Kindly ensure
That wherever that sea of a monkey horde goes
The many forests, mountains, other places
Shall teem with vegetables, fruits and roots,
Honeycombs and potable water." (134)

All those givers of boons---
Brahma, Siva, the great sages, gods
Indra and others, each of them praised him
And their hearts gladdened told him ---
"Lord who can assuage birth's bitterness,
May the monkeys flourish through your grace!" (135)

All the monkeys which had died
From the first day to the last
Arose, hurrahed, thought of the war
And came and bowed to the Lotus-eyed,
Their hearts as well as their eyes delighted. (136)

6. e.g. the boons given to the Rakshasas by the gods, and the boons given to Kaikeyi by Dasaratha. The phrase could also mean, "He who stood in no need of boons".

When the monkeys killed by the fierce arrows
Of Kumbhakarna, Indrajit and Ravana
Came to Rama shouting with joy,
All the gods said to him: (137)

"Reaching Mt, Suvala on the eighth lunar night
Sending the monkey horde to beset Lanka
You destroyed the entire Rakshasan clan
And killed Ravana on newmoon day. (138)

"Lotus-handed, you have rid the world
Of all deceitful creatures
Obeying your mother's order.
The fourteen years are now over
And today is the fifth lunar night
After the last newmoon day. (139)

"If you do not join Bharata at once
He will throw himself into the fire.
To prevent that, victorious hero,
Go at once," said the gods and left.
And Rama began to think. (140)

"If the fourteen years end today
Bharata will die, and my kin with him.
Is there a vehicle which can reach him today?"
He asked, and Vibhishana bowing replied,
"Yes, one which can take you in a day. (141)

"Ravana, Lord, seized it from Kubera.
It can take in your seventy *vellams*.
All who are here can go in it.
You can easily reach in it Ayodhya today. (142)

"Given by Brahma to the Yaksha King
It is as pure as a selfless heart.
It can fly in the air to the wonder of the gods,"
Said he, the clear-headed. "Bring it then",
said Rama. (143)

The Rakshasa King brought it in an instant
Looking like countless crores of worlds,
Shining in the sky like a thousand suns,
Its bells jingling like a thousand crore clouds. (144)

When that chariot neared the earth
Sweet-tempered Rama said with joy,
"Our task is finished" and ascended it
While the gods rained flowers and shouted blessings. (145)

The slender-waisted Trijata bowed
And Sita, the model of chastity,
Said, "Stay here as the goddess of Lanka"
And got up and joined her husband.
And the lion-cub Lakshmana got in too. (146)

From that chariot which resembled
The stomach of the one who swallowed the world,
Faster than a tempest, swift as thought
The Cloud-hued addressed his friends. (147)

Looking lovingly at Vibhishana,
Rama said, "I have a thing to say.
Give joy to your subjects and reign long
Winning the praise of all men. (148)

"You are a model of righteousness,
And belong to a family descended from Brahma.
You can now return to Lanka
Which commands the respect of its foes".
So said the giver of the Vedas to the world. (149)

"Sugriva, with the strength you gave me
I killed Ravana. Take back to your place
Your monkey army which needs rest---
After the attack it sustained from the enemy
Go and live happily", said the renowned. (150)

Similar words he addressed
To Angada, Jambavan, Panasa,
The war-like Nila the great chief
And the merciful hero who had leapt over the sea. (151)

They heard those words and began to shake
Soul and body agitated, eyes full of tears
And putting their heads at his lotusfeet
Said, "We cannot live parted from you"
And proceeded to say this:- (152)

Bound to Rama by the love in their hearts
They said, "Grant us your permission
To go to fortressed Ayodhya,
Enjoy the beauty of your coronation
With a crown of gold and pearls,
Witness the pomp and parade there
And return only after that." (153)

The great one heard their loving words
Saw them shaken by distress
And said, "Do not be agitated.
I too had thought the same thing
But spoke as I did to know your thoughts." (154)

When they heard what he said,
Sugriva, his swarming army,
Vibhishana and others
Fell at the feet of the King of the world
And felt as if they had reached Heaven
With their bodies as well as souls. (155)

Thereupon Rama invited
Sugriva, Hanuman and others with their army
And Vibhishana to ascend the chariot,
Saying, "Come, get in with ease," (156)

No sooner said than Sugriva
His chiefs and sevenly *vellam* monkeys,
Vibhishana and his sea-like army
All got on one side of the aircraft! (157)

Even if the creatures of the fourteen worlds
Ascended it, it had room to spare;
The *jivanmuktas* alone can speak of it ---
None of the common folk on earth. (158)

Sugriva with his servenly *Vellams*,
The guileless Vibhishana with his army,
Lakshmana and Sita on either side
Sitting with adoration, Rama
Heroic and virtuous shone in the chariot. (159)

Rama's pushpaka was like the universe
And the lotus-eyed hero-protector of the world
Seated in it was the Almighty
With virtues that cannot be counted
Without beginning, middle or end,
The great blaze beyond even the Vedas. (160)

Sugriva, the son of the Sun,
And Vibhishana, King of Lanka,
The army, its chiefs and others
Ordered by Rama changed their forms into men's. (161)

Into that pushpaka brought by Vibhishana
For the gods and the others to see
Rama went with Sita and his army
And showed her Lanka as they went.[7] (162)

As if the sun setting in the west
And rising again in the east
Had changed its course, the chariot
Then blazed resistless from South to North.
And Rama spoke to spear-eyed Sita:[8] (163)

Even as he thought it should go round Lanka
From left to right, it had reached the east.
And Rama said, "This is where Prahasta
Met his death at Nila's hand";
And as it reached the southern gate,
"This is where Suparsa was killed." (164)

It reached the west, and Rama said,
"Lakshmana killed Indrajit here";
And when it reached the northern gate,
"Ravana lost his ten crowns and body
Here", he said, and changed the topic. (165)

"Bright Brows, many days after we parted
And I made friends with Sugriva,
Hanuman reached and quelled your tears
And came back with news of you,
Look at the bridge those chiefs put up. (166)

7, 8. This arrangement is more logical than the Kazhakam edition's which prints them as 163, 162. Stanza 162 is actually rejected by Gopalakrishnamachariar and the Swaminatha Aiyar edition as probably spurious.

"Gold-braceleted, regarding its purity
Beyond even Brahma's telling
What shall I say? Nevertheless, hear ---
Even those who have done harm
To their parents, teachers and kinsmen
Seeing it will become gods! (167)

"Lovely-decked, you will find here
A caverned mountain which of old
Fearing Indra, hid in the sea---
Known as Gandamadana,
Contact with this bridge has made it pure. (168)

"The great rivers Ganga, Yamuna,
Godavari, Narmada and Kaveri
Will rid a man of his sins
Only if he bathes in them.
But as for this Setu built across
The shell-filled sea, its mere sight
Will purify one of all one's sins! (169)

"Even those who have killed
Cows, the five gurus[9], the Vedic sages,
Women, sweet-lisping children
And fear-struck refugees with them,
If they bathe in the sea here
Will become gods whom gods will worship. (169a)

"Even those guilty of the fine great sins[10]
Should they bathe here where my bow made a way[11]
Will be free of all ailments for twentyone births
And be treated as treasures by the gods. (169b)

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9. The king, the teacher, father, mother and elder brother.
10. Murder, lying, theft, drunkenness and abusing one's teacher.
11. Rama by drawing the end of his bow across a particular spot in the sea made it easier for ships to cross the sea there. The place is called Danushkodi for that reason.

"Even the Ganges held in the locks
Of ash-smeared Siva with the fire-eye in his forehead
Unhappy at not being Setu
Is engaged in doing a penance---
How can we, Lotus-born, do it justice? (170)

After mentioning all this in praise of Setu
The great bowman showed Sita ---
Eyes black but bright spears, mouth red---
The place where Varuna unable to bear
His wrath rushed to him for refuge. (171)

"This is the hill of the Tamil sage[12]
That Vishnu's Maaliruncholai;
And that other Venkatachalam",
Said Rama, and when Sita asked,
"Where did Hanuman meet you?"
Pointed that hill to her. (172)

"And this is the hill whre the Sun's son stays
Who killed Vali of boundless strength
Who could leap easily across the sea,
And rules his land righteously." (173)

"If this is Kishkindha, Sir", she said,
"Please listen. If I am the only woman
Reaching Ayodhya with innumerable
Gods and soldiers---all men---
That will unbecome my womanhood.
It will be proper to take some women from here" (174)

Rama passed that on to Sugriva
And he said to Hanuman,
"Go quickly, hero, and bring the women
According to their birth and rank",
And that right-minded one did so. (175)

---

12. Agastya.

In an instant Hanuman brought
A flood of those women rank by rank
And they came and bowed to their King
And touched Rama's feet and of womanhood's
Queen. (176)

They placed in order all those things
Considered auspicious and bowed to that queen;
Happy, she said, "What more does one want?"
And the Chariot rose aloft with the speed of thought (177)

When the pushpaka went up in the air
He looked at her, and said, "Dear girl,
That thing there is the Godavari
And that the hill whereon commenced
The agony of our parting. (178)

"Fragrant-haired, listen. This
Is Dandakaranya where sages dwell.
That is Chitrkuta worshipped by Indra
Wherein Bharadwaja resides." (179)

As the hero said this to that lightning
That matchless sage knowing all
Came with others to welcome him
Saying, "My Lord is visiting me." (180)

With an umbrella and ewer in one hand
And with a stick in the other
Mature in wisdom, asceticism embodied
He came, and Rama saw him. (181)

The great hero like a lion
In the fissures of Mt.Meru
Who had, his heart made sore
Destroyed those Rakshasas
Without a grain a pity in them
Mentally ordered that car to descend. (182)

Immediately with that thought
The pushpaka came down
As if heaven was coming down
With all our world's people in it;
And Lord Rama went down quickly
And fell at the feet of the Vedic Sage. (183)

The great one raised him up,
Embraced and blessed him, smelt his head,
And washed away the dust on his hair
With the tears which fell as if from a jug
From his eyes full of love for him. (184)

When Sita dark-haired, and Lakshmana.
Hands clasped in respect approached him
The great sage blessed them, shed tears of love
And in his tenderness rejoiced
As if he had drunk ambrosia. (185)

When Sugriva, Vibhishana and the rest
Did him obeisance he blessed them
And took Rama and his wife to his hermitage,
The groups of sages reciting the Vedas. (186)

Entering it the great sage performed
Many ceremonies as prescribed
And looked at Rama the Sun's descendant
Eyes brimming with tears, and said: (187)

"Great Bowman Prince, you have utterly destroyed
All those cruel-hearted ones
Who caused such terror and distress
To the sages, the gods and the denizens
Of the three worlds, to the great delight
Of the devils which danced with joy!
What more do we need now? (188)

"You have, Sir, with your matchless weapons
Vanquished Viradha, Khara and the stag,
The doughty Kabhanda, the seven *maramaras*,
Vali, the sea, Ravana and Kumbhakarna
And given back its life to the world, (189)

"I cannot forget how your left Chitrakuta
And went down south to destroy evil.
Now that you have come back here
Stay for a while as my guest,"
Said the one learned in the Vedas. (190)

"Great Lord, jade-bodied with red eyes,
Who with the bow in your hand
Have ended the distress of the gods
And bear the worlds, let me tell you
The state of Bharata. Listen to me. (191)

"Body perspiring, eyes shedding tears,
Hating the past, perplexed and sorrowful,
Knowing no quarter except the south,
The very picture of deep distress; (192)

"His senses unused, strictly vegetarian
Sleeping on the grass, never entering the city
He stays in Nandigrama
Reciting your name day and night." (193)

'And added after all this,
"Heroic one who sliced away
The twenty shoulders of the Rakshasas King
Resembling the Blue Mountain range,
And cast down his ten crowned heads
Which were like the great mountains.
Has there ever been a time
When I have not been with you?" (194)

"Great sage", said Rama, "Worthy of praise
By Siva with his lightning wife
And Brahma on his lotus throne,
I have risen so high because
Of worshipping you and getting your grace.,
Which disciple as lucky as I?" (195)

The gracious sage hearing that said,
"Spearman, I have a thing to say,
Ask for whatever boon your wish."
And Rama said,"Let the monkeys
Be free of sorrow and get what they want. (196)

"Ordain that roots and fruits abound
In all the forests where they go
Like water in the rainy season;
And drinking water and honey"---
And the great sage said, "So be it." (197)

Then the sage said, "Sir, I will play host
To you and your huge army"
And made an offering in the fire before him---
Whereupon heaven came down to them! (198)

He saw to it that from the King down
To the slave who served them
All enjoyed the feast he served,
And ensuring that Rama was not neglected
Saved before him tasteful dishes.
The Lotus-eyed then told Hanuman: (199)

"Before I reach Ayodhya today
It is better you go and tell Bharata
Of my welfare, put out the fire,
Find out his condition and his thoughts
And come back and report to me."
"Yes", said the other, and left
With Rama's ring in his hand. (200)

With a speed which outran his father's,
That of his lord Rama's arrow,
As well as of his own thoughts,
He went and told Guha first
Of that virtuous one's arrival
And then went across the sky. (201)

We have told so far of the deeds in the south
Performed by Rama the abode of fame.
Let us now narrate what happened
At Ayodhya the invincible city. (202)

There Bharata worshipped his brother's sandals
Each day at Nandigrama
Not just in the morning, noon and evening
But through out the day,
Controlling his senses well. (203)

His very bones, hard to melt,
Were melted by the sorrow he bore;
Love, a formless and abstract thing,
Took a concrete shape in his form! (204)

Eyes streaming whenever he thought of Rama,
Though he lived in a place abundant
Of roots, vegetables and fruits,
He ate only what a forest would yield. (205)

The only quarter he saw was the South,
Yearning and yearning in the hope
That Rama scion of the Sun would not lie,
He spent his time sighing deep. (206)

He saw no bank to the water from his eyes
Till he could see a bank to the waters
Of the coronation of Rama
Who was everyone's food and water! (207)

Thinking of putting a garland
Round his brother's sandals
He wondered which was the day
That he should be returning. (208)

"When is he due to come?", he thought
And sent for the learned astrologers.
Thereupon they came and declared
That that was the day for the hero's return. (209)

He who had no attachment to possessions
Heard it and remembered what Rama had told him
When he went to the forest to bring him back,
And his breath failing, he fell down. (210)

Then he got up, and his mind swinging
Between hope and despair,
Tears flooded his lotus eyes
And he was plunged in deep distress. (211)

"He will not be staying there
Forgetting his words to me
My grief and his mother's distress
Should he fail to keep his promise.
Something must have happened to him,"
He thought and was much perplexed. (212)

"Even were it the Trinity
Who on earth, in heaven or elsewhere
Can stand against my hero?"
He thought and felt somewhat relieved. (213)

"Did he think that perhaps I
Might wish to continue ruling
And wants me to do so?"
He thought and decided what he should do. (214)

"Whatever may happen, whether he stays on
In the forest or comes back here,
I will not continue in pain
But will lose my life and stain together." (215)

Saying all this to himself
He asked his people to send for his brother,
And as soon as he got the message
The last of the four made his appearance. (216)

Tears streaming from his eyes
Bharata clasped him to his bosom
And said, "I have a boon to beg
Which you must not deny me. (217)

"If you ask me what it is---
Rama has not come as promised
I will fling myself in the fire
And you must obey me and be King." (218)

Hearing that, Satrughna
Closed his ears with his hands
And trembling and feeling as if poisoned
Stood transfixed in body and mind. (219)

He fell down, sobbed, breathed hot sighs,
Then rose and asked, "What harm have I done
To you, unhappy one?" and wailed,
His anger blazing like a fire. (220)

"One gives up a kingdom to rule a forest
And to guard him goes one brother;
Because he does not come back in time
Another brother kills himself.
And I, the last, must stay behind
And rule the land! O, how sweet! (221)

"You stayed outside and commenced
  A great penance
That none might say you entered the city
  And ruled there.
And now if I should stay behind
  Obeying again
Won't it be said I have dispossessed you
  And usurped the rule?" (222)

When Satrughna made as it were
  All of pearl
Pure silver in complexion with eyes
  Red as a lotus
Said that, Bharata replied
  "He delays coming
Only because I am here. Should I die
  He will hurry back
Not leave the kingdom to its fate,
  Will return and rule.
And therefore get a fire ready
  For me", he ordered. (223)

When this news reached Ayodhya,
  Rama's mother
Incomparable in her virtue
  As a woman
Beat her stomach, felt bewildered
  And rushed to Bharata
Saying, "Son, if you should die
  So will the world",
Looking in her haggardness
  A picture of woe. (224)

Councillors, army chiefs, citizens,
  Priests and others,
Lovely women, hands on their heads
  Following distrait;
The gods from Indra down, and sages
  Lauding loud,
The heavenly maidens bowing and crying
  She reached Bharata. (225)

Long hair unbound and falling behind,
  Her body tottering,
She came to that burning place
  And reached her son,
Her eyes streaming, a ceaseless rain;
  And he startled,
Fell devoted at her feet,
  While she
Entered a crowd of people around him
  And caught hold of him. (226)

"What the King did, and my son
Were fated by my past;
What has happened now likewise---
But what are you doing, my son? (227)

"If you think of doing this
All the land will burn with you;
Friendly kings with their armies;
Not only us your mothers
But Dharma too---and the world will whirl. (228)

"We have seen no action of yours
Except as the essence of Dharma.
You do not know your own worth,
The world may end, but never your greatness. (229)

"Will countless crores of Ramas
Equal you in your grace?
If you, virtue in person, die
Will the earth, heaven and creation live? (230)

"If he is not here today
He will come tomorrow and join you.
Do not think that he will go back
On a promise plighted
If he hasn't come, it might well be
Because something has happened to him. (231)

"Because one man has ceased to be
Will you deprive all the world
Including the seeds in wombs
Of that life so precious to them?
You without whom there is no Dharma! (232)

"My son, death and departure
And birth again through infatuation
Are the world's ways. To give up attachment,
To renounce, is what makes for strength",
Said she, the pure-hearted one. (233)

"Please don't think your son defies you.
If my brother's word and my race's deed
Are undependable, I don't wish to live.
I must keep my own word. (234)

"I too am the son of him
Who for turth's sake gave up his life.
Is Rama only to be true?
Doesn't this apply to others also? (235)

"Only Rama can obey
Father and mother, cut off attachment.
I do not aim at any such thing
I will die and prove my stainlessness." (236)

Saying this he approached the fire
While all around were shouting and screaming
To offer it worship---when suddenly
Jumped before him the hill-like Hanuman. (237)

"The chief has come! the great one arrived!
If you the truth of truth are dead,
Will be wish to be alive?"
Said he, rushed in, and with his bare hands
Seized the brands and put them out. (238)

The fire put out, he fell at his feet,
Covered his mouth with his hand
And said, "There is a thing I would say
Worthy of your attention. (239)

"There are still thirteen *naazhikais*
For the prescribed time to elapse.
If this is not true, I, a cur,
Will fall in this fire before you. (240)

"I have only one thing to say:
Tarry, on my word, till the sun
Rises next on the eastern hill.
If Rama does not come by then,
Both you, a stranger to falsehood,
And the world are free to die. (241)

"My Lord has only stayed behind
At the request of Bharadwaja
To be his guest. Wouldn't he else have come?
And now there is one good thing more. (242)

"The King of the world has graciously sent
A signet, which I have brought for you.
Spotless one, have a look at it"---
And Hanuman showed it to him. (243)

When that ring was revealed
To the young Prince and the people gathered
It was as if nectar had been given
To someone poisoned, and on the brink of death. (244)

All mouths crying now shouted with joy;
All eyes shedding tears became dry;
All heads which were bowed now shot up;
And all hands saluted Hanuman. (245)

He took that ring, and raised it to his face,
Bowed again and again to the bowing messenger,
And swelled visibly as if to shame
Those who doubted whether his thin body
Could bear the weight of Rama's love. (246)

His only food sorrow after parting from Rama
He had got so thin a breath could have
blown him off.
And now he looked a different man,
His shoulders expanding and rising like hills. (247)

He would weep, he would laugh; clasp his hands
to Hanuman;
Rise, leap up and fall down;
Look perplexed, swell out, perspire;
Dance with the people there, clapping his hands. (248)

"Dance, dance", he would say, "run, run to your Lord
Sing, sing," he would say, "his fame aloud"
"Crown, crown", he would say "your heads, sinners,
With the feet of the messenger'." (249)

He would clap his shoulders joyously
Saying, "Kaikeyi the cheat will droop."
Hop alternately on his feet
Stand erect, a jade mountain and burst into song. (250)

Bow to the Brahmins, bow to the kings;
Bow to the servant-maids, bow to himself;
Act unconscious and stand still---
Isn't true love like drunkenness? (251)

Then, "Who are you?" he asked Hanuman,
"Please tell me. You are perhaps
One of the Trinity-though you look
Somewhat different from any of them. (252)

"You have come to me in the garb of a Brahmin
Though I think you are one of the Trinity.
Tell me quickly who you are",
Said he, and Hanuman answered him. (253)

"Prince, I am a monkey born to one
Of that race who did penance
And to the god of Wind---honoured
To be a slave to your brother
And appearing in a changed form. (254)

"Cast your eyes on me, a cur,
And my small frame", he said;
And casting away his assumed form
Drew himself up, his head touching heaven. (255)

The two fierce bowmen and Vasishtha
Were taken aback by the wonder they saw;
The army although not prostrated
Was nevertheless frightened by Hanuman's form. (256)

"What we say from here won't reach
Those ears of yours with their ear-rings;
So, be pleased to reduce your body
Quickly", beseeched Bharata. (257)

To the Sun's pupil who stood before him
Shrunk in form, Bharata gave,
On the instant boundless wealth
And gold ornaments which he could wear. (258)

The expert bowman gave Hanuman
Cows, clothes, high-class gems,
Elephants, horses and chariots
Well-watered lands and other things. (258a)

He told his brother to command
Ayodhya's citizens by beat of drum
To welcome with their kinsmen
Rama who was returning. (258b)

"Tell them to put up buntings,
Spread cloth on pillars, put out pots
Bright and golden full of water
And arrange a procession
Of elephants, horses and chariots. (258c)

"Tell them to put up a *pandal*
Of choice pearls, from Ayodhya's ramparts
Right up to Bharadwaja's ashram
And to make Ayodhya new." (258d)

Satrughna with his doughly shoulders
Carrying a mountainous bow
Heard those words, bowed and explained them
To Sumantra, his companion,
Well-versed and efficient. (258e)

When the ocean of good sense heard those order
His mind overwhelmed with love,
He told the drummers to spread the news
In all the gem-lit streets of Ayodhya (258f)

And they, mounted on elephants,
Told the army and the princes,
To get ready and welcome that day
Rama whose fame spread across all space. (258g)

When it heard that drum beat
That city feeling boundless joy
Rose with its princes, citizens and Brahmins
Like a sea at flood-tide (258h)

The drums asking them to welcome Rama.
Made the citizens feel like a poor man
Who suddenly finds gold,
And resembled the drum beats which asked them
To get ready to go to Mithila. (258i)

An army of sixtythousand *akshauhinis*,
Kings, citizens and their women
Went to welcome Rama,
With the joy one feels when the wealth one seeks
Comes of itself towards one. (258j)

The three mothers whom the gods respected
Got into a palanquin
And after they left, Bharata,
Surrounded by the matchless rishis
And his kinsmen, took Hanuman's hand. (258k)

He went crowned with Rama's sandals
As if they were things of gold,
Chowries waving or either side,
Music like the seven seas' roar,
Under the shade of a white umbrella. (258l)

"Bharata goes to welcome my Lord
The great bowman walking on foot;
The grit on the road if heated
Might hurt his lotus sóles", thought the sun
And to prevent this went down. (258m)

Then the righteous Bharata
With his hand in Hanuman's hand
Asked him, "Where did Rama stay?
Tell me all about his doings? (258n)

Hanuman heard him, bowed and said,
"Surely it won't be necessary
For me to say anything
About Rama's going to Mithila,
His marriage and later his exile? (258o)

Rama's messenger decided then
To narrate all that had happened
To Rama leaving Chitrakuta
And getting involved with the ten-headed one
Until the time he himself got here. (259)

"After the great bowman left
Chitrakuta, he killed the doughty
Viradha, and neached Dandaka
The forest where the great sages dwelt. (260)

"The ascetics who were residing there
Said 'Persecuted by the Rakshasas
We have slided from our penances'·
And he told them he would kill those
And on that they should cease to
grieve warrant. (261)

"After a stay of ten years
In their ashramas guided by them
He went to the forest where the Tamil sage was ---
The great one who joyfully welcomed him. (262)

"He who had swallowed the entire sea
In one palmful gave Rama
A bow, quivers full of arrows
An armour and a trusty sword. (263)

"Then they saw the king of the eagles
And Rama, his brother and his coral-lipped wife ---
A very peacock---went and stayed
In Panchavati with its clouds and groves. (264)

"Many days later a sinful Rakshasi
Appeared, and hating Sita
Was deprived by the younger hero
Of her ears, nose and breasts ---
And she went and complained to Khara. (265)

"Khara, Trichiras and Dhushana
Three blazing fires rushed in
With a fierce army, and all of them
Were dealt with by Rama's bow
And were destroyed like cotton by a fire
And the Rakshasi took her way to Lanka. (266)

"When the twenty-handed heard her woes
He rose in wrath to the terror of all,
Sent a deceitful stag first,
And himself in the form of an ascetic
Lifted Sita with the ground she stood on
And carried her away, south to Lanka. (267)

"On his way he met Jatayu
And killing him in a fight
Took the heart-afflicted Sita
And immured her in a prison.
After killing Maricha
Rama with his brother saw
Jatayu their father in a pitiful state. (268)

"After doing the obsequies for him
Rama went searching for Sita in the south;
Ended Kabandha's life and curse
And accepted the self-less Sabari's worship. (269)

"Advised by her he made friends
With Sugriva, promised to free him
Of Vali's persecution,
Shot his arrows through tall trees
As well as through Vali's heart
And restored to Sugriva his wealth and kingdom. (270)

"When the rains were over, our king
Went to him with Gavaya,
Idaba, Neela. Mainda, Jambavan,
Satavali, Panasa, Vali's son
And a horde of monkeys under those chiefs. (271)

"When seventy *vellams* of those monkeys
Rose in this way like a wide sea
Sugriva sent in each direction
Two *vellams* of these with instructions
To search out Sita and get back
Within the time which he prescribed. (272)

"Two *vellams* of this horde went to the south
With Angada and Jambavan,
And as ordered by them, I, a cur
Reaching Lanka on the hill
Spotted Sita there and came back.
And a huge sea of an army
Encamped at the sea shore. (273)

"Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana,
The wisest among the wise
Advised him to release Sita ---
Otherwise he was sure to die ---
But this only enraged him,
And so he left him and took refuge
With Rama the merciful. (274)

"Rama gave him refuge and the kingdom;
Called up Varuna politely
And waited awhile, but when he didn't come
His eyes got red with anger
And Varuna's body began to boil. (275)

"Then when he surrendered
The victorious monkeys arose,
Put up a bridge, entered Lanka,
Captured it shouting, and the gods lost their fear. (276)

"Rama bending his bow brought down
The shoulders which had lifted Kailasa
The chest which had faced the *diggajas*,
His ten heads, his brother's hands and feet
And the entire race of the Rakshasas
Putting an end to the god's distress. (277)

"Lakshmana with a single shaft
Brought down Indrajit
And the youngmen and their families.
The perplexed and unhappy gods
Now relieved rained flowers and hailed
And saw the dance of headless corpses. (278)

"The gods, the sages, the siddhas and their wives
And all the people in the three worlds
Swarming round him worshipped Rama;
And the *Poovai*-hued told Vibhishana
What he should do, and asked him
To do the obsequies due to the dead. (279)

Brahma, Siva, Maya and others
Worshipping him, Bharata,
He felt wroth with the heavenly maiden
But on Agni's assurance abated his anger. (280)

"Dasaratha coming down from heaven,
Rama, Lakshmana and Sita
Fell at his feet, and he raised and embraced them,
Bathed them in his tears and asked Rama
To ask for a boon from him
Which the Lord of Lakshmi did. (281)

"He asked that his mother and brother
Should be restored to what they were
And this was granted; and after he left
The denizens of heaven granted boons
For the good of the monkeys, and also left. (282)

"Lanka's King, Vibhishana,
With his fame undiminished
Gave the aerial car to Rama
So that the seventy *vellam* monkeys
And the sixtyseven crores of Rakshasas
Could all be accomodated
To Sugriva's satisfaction. (283)

"Remembering you lovingly
Rama, surrounded by Sugriva,
His friends, Vibhishana and others
Got with Sita into the chariot
And reached Bharadwajas place. (284)

"He sent me, Prince, with this ring
Out of his love for you
To show it to you and remove your grief"
Said he who had erstwhile
Out of his love for Rama
Leapt over the sea as if over a canal
And laid Lanka as a dish to the Fire god! (285)

Bharata heard what Hanuman said
And with tears in his eyes replied,
'A brother went with the Cloud-hued one
To hunt the Rakshasas in Lanka,
And I staying here can only
Hear about those things and wilt.
Such has been this slave's renown!" (286)

So he said, feeling frustrated,
Eyes streaming with tears
And taking Hanuman by his hand
Went in the dark to the Ganges
And got there before the sun
Came round to rise in the eastern sea. (287)

He rose as if Indra, Lord of the East,
Was coming up with a crown jewel
To put on the head of my Lord Rama
At his coronation
To the joy of the goddesses of the Earth and Fortune
After his successful hunt of Ravana
And return to Ayodhya. (288)

In the morning, after his worship
Of Rama's sandals as was his wont,
Bharata looked at the monkey chief
And said, "Wise one, it looks as if
What you said when examined
Is not quite true even though
Few can gainsay what you have said. (289)

"If seventy *vellam* monkey warriors
And the sea of Vibhishana's army
Are due here in their countless numbers
Should we not hear some sound of it?
Have you made a mistake regarding his coming? (290)

"Great one! Bharadwaja's grove
Is barely two yojanas from here.
How can an army of seventy *vellams*
Which should be making a noise like the sea
Stay there so quietly?
Is what you said true? Where is Rama?" (291)

When Bharata said that, Hanuman
Bowing to him replied;
"Great ascetic, by the boon procured
By Rama for them from the gods
The monkey army feeding all day
On flowers and honey must have fallen asleep! (292)

"By the boons which the gods gave
The forests humming with bees
Are full of honey, fruits and roots;
And the monkeys feeding on them
Have no time to make a noise.
Don't you, my Father, feel anxious! (293)

"In a few moments you will yourself
With tearful eyes see my Lord's arrival",
Said he. And now let me narrate
What Rama did in the sage's *ashrama*. (294)

While the sage fed them with exquisite things
And Rama and the rest were enjoying them
The King of the hunters turned up
With his great army huge as the sea. (295)

He bowed, heart and eyes full;
He cried, clasped the lotus feet;
And Rama raising and embracing him
As if he was his younger brother
Asked, "Are your wife and children well"? (296)

"I, a cur", he said, "have your grace.
Those are not important.
I could not go with you and do
The things your younger one did for you.
How could life have been sweet for me?" (297)

As crying he said all this and more
Rama said, "How can you talk like this?
Are you not like Bharata?
Go and be happy," and Guha
Fell at the feet of Sita and Lakshmana. (298)

Looking at him standing devoted
With his companions, the great one
Who understood everything said,
"This is the Lord of Ganga
Which runs deep and washes its banks.
More loving than a mother, this hunter KIng
Who has no faults is knows as Guha." (299)

When he said that Sugriva
And the rest embraced him
And became his friends.
And the sun set behind the beautiful hills
As if he would cover all the world
With a blanket of darkness. (300)

After performing the evening rites
Rama with Sita went to sleep;
While Lakshmana and the hunter chief
Surrounded by that sea of an army
Stood awake calmly as guardians.
And the sun duly arose. (301)

When the sun rose Rama performed
The morning rites, and with his brother
Went to the sage to bid farewell;
Then got into the *pushpaka*
And left with Sita and his friends
The sage's mind following him. (302)

As the *pushpaka* leapt and moved forward
Uninterrupted in its flight
The virgin fortress of Ayodhya
Beautiful as a breathing picture
And putting Indra's city to shame
Appeared on the horizon. (303)

When that city appeared
With its rampart walls of gold,
Rama, the Lord of Wisdom,
Told his wise companions,
"Look at Ayodhya beautiful
Beyond anyone's description,"
And all of them rose and saluted it
Hands clasped in adoration. (304)

Then appeared in the sky
As if a thousand suns at once
The golden *pushpaka*, and in it
Rama the King of Kings! (305)

"See", said Hanuman, "the lotus-eyed Rama,
The sea of the monkey army,
The jewel of chaste women, and the bowman
Who took birth after you. (306)

"Look at the Eternal One
In that dazzling chariot
Which, even if the fourteen worlds entered it,
Will still be having space to spare!" (307)

And as if a raincloud
On the golden Meru
Appeared Rama in that aerial car
And the joyous shouts the city raised
Reached even beyond Ravana's Lanka. (308)

Then did the younger brother see
His very life, the lotus-eyed one
Who had gone to the forest, as if he saw
His father returning from that heaven
To which he had gone leaving his body
Here behind, for the sake of truth. (309)

Then the great one let go of Hanuman
So that he might go and worship his brother
As one who had lost a precious thing
On seeing it again goes to it
Shaking off all the sorrow he had felt
Previously on losing it. (310)

Hanuman too at that instant
Rose and reached the *pushpaka*
To stand before the discus - bearer
His chest covered with tears. (311)

"You with Lakshmi on your chest,"
Said he, "I rescued this hero
From the fire he was going to enter
By announcing your return
Whereby stand all the worlds where they do! (312)

"Because of our bad deeds in the past,"
Said Rama," relentless death
Has been pursuing us.
But Truthful One, our great good boon,
With your love for us more than a mother's
You have saved us again and again." (313)

Saying which the Hill-shouldered
Hugged him and said further,
"How can a few words do justice
To you my Father, dear Brother, and Mother"? (314)

Then appeared Bharata
Who had earned such great renown
Crowned with Rama's sandals,
Hands raised in worship, and so thinned
That there hardly seemed to be life in him. (315)

Bowing to him Hanuman
The witness of truth said to Rama,
"See before you your brother
Who has been ruling this great kingdom
And hating his mother for it!" (316)

When Rama, shown by Hanuman, saw him
He felt exactly as he did
When he saw his father's form
In the aerial chariot earlier. (317)

Then when Rama thought, "I would see
The citizens of Ayodhya
The sixtythousand akshaauhini army
And my mothers who have come here",
The *pushpaka* glided down to the earth. (317a)

When it came down to earth it looked
As if it was the vehicle
Which would take all lives everywhere
Upto the heaven their good deeds had earned. (317b)

Then that *pushpaka* touched the earth,
The gods from heaven raining flowers
As if Indra was returning to his city
After being away from it. (318)

He came to his mother as a calf
 Returning to its cow;
To the wise ones freed of illusion
 As their goal, the Supreme Being;
To his famished younger brothers
 As the apple of their eyes;
To everyone as life coming back
 To a diseased and nigh-dead one! (319)

To all the poor a mother;
To his lovers ambrosia;
To the world a new brightness;
To winsome eyes wine! (320)

Since he was their life, without him
The land, the city, the lovely girls
And the children were mere pictures --
But on his return they came to life. (321)

Powders, pastes, ghee, pearls,
Flowers, oils, foam from horses,
Must from elephants, water, tears
From maidens fond of *kasturi* ---
All of them mingled and crossed the sea! (322)

When all of them exulting thus,
His three mothers, brothers and guru
Ascended the *pushpaka*,
That hero came forward and fell first
At the great sage's feet. (323)

The sage raised and blessed him
And to relieve his sorrow clasped him
Lovingly again and again.
And when the younger hero
Also fell down before him,
He too was treated likewise. (324)

Rama stooped first to Kaikayi's feet
And then to those of the other two.
All of them raised and embraced him
And bathed him in the tears from their eyes. (325)

Sita too did exactly the same;
And when the matchless younger brother
Ever victorious fell at their feet
The mothers raised, embraced him and said,
"Long may you live!" and blessed him. (326)

When Bharata joined his sandals
To Rama's feet as a living tribute,
Rama took him up, and sobbing
Did not know what to say.
He only hugged him as if now
Body and soul were united
And exhausted could only weep! (327)

Tears from his eyes, as he embraced him,
Fell on the matted hair he wore
Which ruined his youthful beauty,
And washed all its dirt clean.
Rama smelt his head, and was
Like a cow with its calf. (328)

Then the vanquisher of Indrajit
Put his head under the feet of one
Who had made swift horses, elephants,
Chariots and all things like them
Subject and inferior to
The leather of the shoes of Rama! (329)

Tears from his lotus eyes
  Running in all directions
Bharata embraced Lakshmana
  With his long hands
And all those witnessing this
  Were intrigued by the thought,
"Which causes more leanness
  Unparted to live in a forest
Or separated to pine in a town
  With all its luxuries?" (330)

The one younger than the other three
Hands clasped in reverence over his head
Fell at the feet of Rama and Lakshmana
After first showering flowers on them.
They took him up and embraced him;
And after that he fell at the feet
Of Sita, a very swan! (331)

Rama with his large hands
Took up that inseparable[13]
And embraced him heartily.
He introduced his friends to those brothers
And they, come with him, did them reverence. (332)

Bharata, chest adorned with garland,
Did honour to each of these
As was only fit and proper ---
Sugriva, Angada, Kumuda.
Jambavan, Nila and their likes
As well as the Rakshasa King. (333)

Then came Sumantra, handsome, victorious
With councillors, army chiefs, his kinsmen
And the lordly kings of the earth
As well as with the army. (334)

Sorrow and joy at war within him,
He made obeisance, rose, sobbed and stood;
Rama and his brothers than clasped him;
And he said, "Mother Earth has no more sorrows." (335)

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13. Inseparable from Bharata as Lakshmana was from him.

"Let that army mount the *pushpaka*,"
Said Rama, the matchless hero.
And all those who had come ascended
As clouds from the sea rise the sky
And there they paid their respects to Lakshmana. (336)

The gods from Heaven scattered flowers
And said, "This chariot is more wonderful
Than that gem of a stomach which took in the world
And the Vedic palm[14] which drank up the sea." (337)

The noise of the drums, Vedic chants and conches
The vocal music and the paens together
Rising like the thunder of the clouds
And the roar of the seven seas
Spread in all quarter and rose to heaven
Only to be drowned by the gods' huzzahs there! (338)

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14. Agastya's.

38. CORONATION

Reaching Nandigrama with Bharata
Rama cut off his matted hair,
Had a shave, and after a bath
With all his brothers, adorned himself
As prescribed, to the joy of the gods. (1)

From that place in the south west
He proceeded to Ayodhya
With its beflagged fortress
In a carriage drawn by white horses
Four in number like the Vedas
And adorned with glittering jewels. (2)

In a golden chariot which could outlast
Dissolution, Lakshmana
Tall as a tusker seven cubits high
Carried the umbrella.
The other strong brother twirled a milk-white chowrie
While Bharata whip in hand drove the chariot
Tears of joy falling from his eyes
Enough to lay the dust on the roads. (3)

Vibhishana and Sugriva
Mounted on tuskers on either side
Of the chariot which carried the Cloud-hued;
Red-eyed Angada riding in front;
Hanuman the hero who could fight Adisesha
Went bringing up the rear. (4)

Sixtyseven crores of monkey chiefs
In human form
Rode on elephants under white umbrellas,
Their chests daubed with sandal paste
And adorned with garlands. (5)

Kings of the earth's eighteen divisions
And of the seven islands
On elephants with gold bands on their foreheads
Or in golden chariots
Under huge white parasols
With flywhisks and crowns reaching the sky
Also went circling him with devotion. (6)

The female monkeys like heavenly nymphs
Riding elephants, horses and various vehicles
Surrounded Sita like stars the moon,
The swan of Mithila being drawn in a chariot. (7)

Gods and sages strewed flowers from each quarter
And the earth was so covered with them
That there was no room anywhere
For anything but flowers.
And the name for the earth which is the same for a flower[1]
Seemed singularly appropriate. (8)

The tuskers which for fourteen years
Like clouds in summer were quite dry
Now that Rama was back from the forest
Rained must as if in exultation. (9)

The horses which were dumb so long
Neighed like thunder, as if a mute
Had suddinly got the gift of speech;
Trees flowered out of their season;
And maidens with their brows like bows
Came out in spots with excitement. (10)

1. The Tamil *poo*

The blessed one reaching Ayodya
Bowed to his mothers and his guru
And reaching the palace temple saw
The deities of Earth and Fortune dancing! (11)

Men and women not used to strip
And holding on carefully to their clothes
Swelling with joy and leaping arround
Danced nearly bare as if they were drunk! (12)

Kings wore the dress of courtesans,
Male Brahmins the saris of women,
And even those who normally avoided
Sandal-paste and scent, rubbing in the crowd
Smelt twice as fragrant as those who wore them! (13)

The women who in those fourteen years
- With their crescent - brows and bangles ---
Kept themselves to themselves
Because Rama would not reign,
Now that he had returned at last
Covered themselves with jewellery
To infatuate their men! (14)

The citizens of heaven and earth mingling freely
The gods acquired the smell of humans
And the humans that of the gods,
So that their respective wives
Got suspicious and began to sulk! (15)

Then Rama beckoning Bharatha told him,
"Show Vibhishana and Sugriva,
The great monkey chiefs and others
Our glorious family temple". (16)

Bharata bowed, rose with the others.
Crossed many mansions and took them
To the family fane which was as glorious
On the earth as the temple in heaven
On Mount Meru where Lakshmi resides. (17)

Dazzled by the blaze of the gems---
Diamonds, rubies, saphires, emeralds---
The heroes normally slow to excite
Were struck with wonder and amazement
And stood wide-eyed, their hearts in their mouths! (18)

They saw it glittering like the gem
On Vishnu's chest and asked Bharata about it;
Whereupon Bharata replied,
"This was given by Brahma of old
As a loving boon to a doughty King
Who won it by his great penance. (19)

"The matchless Brahma on his lotus
Gave this to Ishvaku
And the goddess Lakshmi dwells here."
"How can we praise it enough?" said they,
Raised this red hands, and shifted elsewhere. (20)

There they rested, and Sugriva
Dwelling on that mansion's nature
Bowed to Bharata and asked,
"How is it that we don't know yet
The date of Rama's coronation?"
To which answered Bharata: (21)

"It takes time for the waters to come
From the seven seas and other great rivers"
Whereupon Sugriva glanced at Hanuman
And the latter leapt across the world! (22)

"Bring the great sage and other astrologers[2]"
Ordered Bharata; and Sumantra informed them;
And that great son of Brahma[3] came
And all arose and touched his feet. (23)

When Bharata seated him on a throne
He said, "Tomorrow is most suitable
For Rama to take over the rule
Of Mother Earth with the goddess Lakshmi." (24)

Priests wise as Brihaspati
And Vasishtha sent written messages
Fixing the day and the time
For Rama's coronation. (25)

When the eager messengers took the news
To the three worlds one on another,
And their denizens in each corner came
To Ayodhya to witness the event,
Is it possible even for a Brahma
To say exactly how many arrived? (26)

Then Vasishtha, Bharata, Sugriva,
Vibhishana, Jambavan and Angada
And all the other heroes there
Went to Rama, bowed and told him: (27)

"Tomorrow is an auspicious day
For you to be crowned. Please get ready
For the event." So spoke the sage
Who equalled Siva the *poolai*[4] crowned
Who with the eye in the middle of his forehead
Reduced the god of Love to ashes. (28)

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2. The Kazhakam reading.
3. Vasishtha.
4. A flower.

Ordered by Brahma the stag-faced Maya,
An expert architect, put up with reverence
That very day, after careful measurements
A faultless hall which could take in the world! (29)

Hanuman who had brought the elixir
Now brought the waters from the four seas
Surrounding the world, and the seven famous oceans
As he had promised when orderd to bring them
With the speed of his father at Dissolution! (30)

Riding hundreds of elephants
Kings under white umbrellas
Brought in gem-set pots
The water of the river Sarayu;
To the noise and din of trumpets and conches
And the melody of music! (31)

They set up in that crystal hall
A beautiful throne of rubies
With legs of diamond and sides of gold;
And seated in that were the shining hero
With his well-decked shoulders and Lakshmi-Sita. (32)

Benisons sung, Vedas recited,
Conches blown, cymbals struck,
Drums beaten, melodies floated,
Flowers rained, and one by one
The gods came and took part in the ceremony! (33)

Great sages, Vedic scholars, old councillors
And other men mature in wisdom
Were the first to pour the waters;
And after that Sugriva and his retinue,
Hanuman and the King of Lanka. (34)

"Erstwhile", said the learned ones,
"Siva carried on his head
The water issuing from the foot
Which leapt to the sky and Brahma washed:
Where and how will he now bear
The water descending from the head
Of the maned lion, Rama,
At this coronation?" (35)

A lotus forest on a jade mountain
Bathed in the waters of the Ganges
With a long spear-eyed peacock on it!
Will those who saw this rare sight
Undergo birth's pain again? (36)

Devoted sages pointed out
The things needed for that divine rite
To be performed by Vasishtha,
And loyal Sumantra with his ministers
Managing to bring them
They arrived as if for a function
Ordered by Indra himself! (37)

Hanuman bearing the throne,
  Angada the sword,
Bharata the white umbrella,
  And the other two twhirling the chowries,
Lakshmi seated beside him,
  Vasishtha was handed the crown
By an ancestor of Vennaiyur Satayan[5]
  And he put it on Rama's head! (38)

5. Kamban's patron, vide chapter VII stanza 9.

On a day selected by priests who remembered
    Sukra and Brihaspathi[6]
Auspicious in all respects, he who took
    Lakshmi the sea-born and our Earth
Had the crown put on his head
    To the delight of the three worlds. (39)

Though the Vedic experts like-minded with Rama
Placed that crown on the head of one man
The joy the denizens of the three worlds felt
Was as if that shining crown
Had been put on the head of each of them. (40)

The maiden, the good Earth, who after long penance
Had acquired a husband worthy of herself,
Had soon after lost him.
Now at last when she regained him
And her long distress was over,
She stretched her tendril hands to clasp him
To her bosom to give it joy! (41)

As advised rightly by the sage
Rama, generous , took the occasion
To crown Bharata as his deputy,
Gave him the sceptre and asked him to rule
While choosing a boundless joy for himself! (42)

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6. The priests respectively of the demons and the gods.

39. FAREWELL

In that hall with gem-set pillars
Which looked like a jewel of mother Earth
On a jewelled platform sat Rama
With the lotus-maid beside him,
Looking like a raincloud streaked with lightning. (1)

A necklace of pearls like lightnig on the sea
His gem-set crown like the burning sun
The King of Ayodhya reclined on his throne
Like a dark cloud on a lotus-forest. (2)

White chowries held in the lotus-hands
Of spear eyed-maids with tender-breasts
Swept his shoulders like moonbeams
Falling on a jade mountain
While Nagas, men and the gods from heaven
Extolled him and sang his praises. (3)

The moon in the sky waned depressed
Because the beams from Rama's forehead
Lighted the fourteen world much better;
His white umbrella rose aloft
A sign of his conquest of Ravana. (4)

Songs were sung of benediction;
Blessings given by Vedic Brahmins;
Conches blown, cymbals struck;
Drums beaten, melodies floated;
And maidens shark-eyed and red-mouthed
With lotus faces danced like peacocks. (5)

The gems from crores of crowns with their rays
Put to shame the sun from the sea,
Kings crowding daily at his gate
Touching his feet and making them redder! (6)

Old councillors around, Brahmins singing paeans,
Army chiefs bowing, brothers at hand,
And coral lipped women singing benedictions
My Lord rested there, resembling Indra. (7)

With sixtyseven crores of warriors---
Mainda, Duminda, Kumbha, Angada,
Hanuman, Kumudakannan, Satavali, Kumuda,
Dadimukha and Gogachamukha; (8)

And many others of sevenly *vellam* monkeys
Led by Sugriva going around;
And Vibhishana garlanded King
With his Rakshasa chariots and swordsmen
Come to offer their respects to him; (9)

And Guha with his victorious army,
A leopards' tail used as his belt,
Eyes rolling, shoulders like rocks,
A lion in might, the Ganges fleet King
Also in devoted attendance; (10)

The generous Rama his face an index
Of the boundless love felt for them
Clutching them all to his heart as it were
Looked sweetly at them all
And said, "Faultlesss heroes,
Stay here at your ease." (11)

Wise moralists, Vedic scholars,
Masters of speech and poets,
Friends to virtue mature in lores
Surrounded in their order the King of kings. (12)

The Kings of the lands in this sea-girt earth
Liked to reside respectfully
With the serpent-bedded in the many-groved city
And spent the time gladly--- and two months passed. (13)

Let me now narrate the later deads
Of the one with Lakshmi on his chest
Who had come down to Ayodhya
Sued on his serpent-bed by the gods
To ease their distress, which he did
Destroying all the Rakshasas
With his strong and well bound bow. (14)

He gave to all the Brahmins
Gems, pearls and gold,
Fertile lands and cows beyond number
Removing the wants of all who felt them,
And then invited the kings who came. (15)

Rama looking on them well-pleased
Gave them lovingly lands, palanquins,
Garlands, gem-set crowns, gold jewels,
Horses with trimmed manes, strong chariots,
Elephants and clothes --- and giving all these
Gave them also leave to depart! (16)

He gave to Sugriva the son of the Sun
The bracelet which Indra had given his father
When he defeated Sambaran
At the time of his own birth,
And elephants, chariots, horses and robes. (17)

The Lord faultless in victory
Gave to Angaḍa the jewel
Known as angada and given to Ishvaku
By Brahma as if to perpetuate
The name of "Angada" on earth ---
Who on earth can sing its praise? (18)

Besides he gave him a precious necklace,
Soft silks, horses and elephants;
And said, "Who but you can equal you?
Live and thrive with the son of the Sun." (19)

Looking at Hanuman with great pleasure
He said, "Who can be as helpful as you?
There is nothing I can do
In return for the aid you gave me.
Doughty one who helped me in the war,
Come and embrace me tight," he said. (20)

When Hanuman hearing this felt shy,
Bowed, was struck dumb and retreated
To a corner, the renowned Rama
Looked at him and presented him
With a necklace of gold and diamonds,
Soft dhotis and strong elephants and horses. (21)

The honey-tongued who had left her lotus
To appear in golden Mithila
Looked at Rama and with his approval
Gave to Hanuman a string of pearls
Which Saraswati had given her
Revealing thereby how she valued
What he did that day to relieve her misery. (22)

He who had created the world
Presented the King of the bears
With a garland of pearls which outshone
The stars and were bright as the moon,
Fit to be given to Indra,
With elephants, horses, robes and jewels. (23)

A necklace of the nine gems, pearls,
Garlands and good clothes,
Incomparable gold ornaments,
Race horses with jingling harnesses
And fierce elephants were presented
To Nala the son of the wind gods' friend.[1] (24)

Vishnu-Rama who gave Brahma to the world
Gave to Satavali horses with anklets
And gold harnesses, elephants with tusks,
Ornaments of gold and gems
And all things worthy for a house. (25)

His huge shoulders jewel-decked
Rama gave to Kesari
A brilliant and a priceless jewel
Whose like could never have been found,
With clothes, elephants thrice as fierce
As Badavagni, and horses. (26)

The King of Kosala with its ricefields and lotuses
Gave jewels, clothes, elephants and horses
To Nala, Kumuda, Tara, Parasa
And others, so that they were thoroughly pleased. (27)

In that manner he gave away
To the sixtyseven crore of monkey chiefs
All manner of good things, spoke them fair,
And to the seventy *vellams* of monkeys
His gracious look to ensure their happiness. (28)

Looking at Vibhishana, the learned King
With his crown like lightning and red eyes,
He said, "There is none equal to you---
And even if someone were like you
The gulf between him and you will be
As between iron and gold." (29)

1. The fire god.

Saying this, the serpent bedded
Gave him a blazing jewelled bracelet
The immortals had given him,
With huge elephants, chariots, horses,
Golden ornaments, lovely clothes,
Scented powders and sandal paste. (30)

Looking at the chief of Sringabhera[2]
He said, "What shall I say
To my spotless friend?" and gave him
Dark elephants, horses, gold, clothes, jewels
All together, and bade farewell. (31)

To Hanuman, Vali's son, Jambavan, Sugriva
That ocean of mercy declared,
"It is hard even to think
Of saying farewell to you.
But your land is dear to me
And must be guarded carefully---
And therefore I must send you there." (32)

When the great one said the same sweet things
To the King of Lanka
All of them good-hearted and sensible,
Though at first perturbed, calmed down
And said "This is a duty we must do." (33)

Those well-versed in right conduct
Went round Bharata, Lakshmana,
Satrughna, Vasishtha,
The three mothers, Sita and Rama,
Lauded, bent low to them
Took leave and went to their different places. (34)

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2. Guha.

Vibhishana, his heart filled with love,
Left Guha in his place and the Sun's son in his,
And surrounded by the Rakshasas
Went by air and reached Lanka
The sea-girt isle the very same day. (35)

Rama parting from them
Ruled all the earth according to Manu
Helped by their grace-filled company
So that neither the goddess of Fortune
Nor the goddess of the Earth
Had any cause to complain,
Ending the sorrows of all in the land. (36)

The great one who had arrived
From Sesha in heaven to Ayodhya on earth
Ruled with his brothers guarding Dharma and the earth
So that all in heaven and below,
And in the seven worlds, hailed and praised him
As "Our Lord", and gladly did his bidding. (37)

Those who tell the story of Rama
Who appeared on earth to kill Ravana
And guard all the world, and with his brothers
Stands as the one beyond the beyond
Will become kings and conquer even Death. (37a)

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